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Nick Carter Stories

THE YELLOW LABEL

OR

NICK CARTER AND THE SOCIETY LOOTERS

"HANDS up, if you don't want a bullet in you!" he cried, leveling his weapon at Atherton with one hand, while with the other he pressed the switch beside the door and flooded the room with light.

The intruders had been content with their electric torches and the brilliant flame of the blowpipe.

With simultaneous cries of dismay the four men spun round and faced the owner of the house.

"Stop that instantly, or I'll fire!" cried the latter, as Atherton's hand stole toward his pocket. "Put your hands up, all of you! This revolver is loaded in every chamber, and, as you may be aware, I have some little reputation as a crack shot."

Half the length of the room separated him from the four men, and if they had attempted to rush him, he could have—and probably would have—dropped all four of them before they could have reached him.

"That's better!" he said grimly, as the quartet quickly raised their hands above their heads. "Now, kindly oblige me by walking backward and standing with your backs to that wall behind you. Be quick about it!"

The waiter outside could have laughed at the ignominious spectacle presented by the four masked burglars as they silently and sullenly shuffled backward, and ranged themselves in a line against the wall, but all his plans for the future would be ruined if these men were captured and their identity unmasked. They must be allowed to escape, and after a moment's hurried thought, the waiter drew out his own revolver and cautiously pushed the muzzle under the lower edge of the curtain.

"I'm now going to ring for help," the millionaire announced, moving slowly toward an electric button set into his desk. "You'll remain just where you are until the servants come, and the very first man who——"

NICK CARTER STORIES

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THE YELLOW LABEL;

Or, NICK CARTER AND THE SOCIETY LOOTERS.

Edited by CHICKERING CARTER.

CHAPTER I.

AN ENTERPRISING WAITER.

Alfred Knox Atherton was one of the most popular members of the "Marmawell Club." He was a man in the prime of life, but, in spite of his wealth and good looks—and in spite of the schemes of designing mothers—he was still unmarried.

He had a country house in the Berkshires, and a luxuriously furnished bachelor's apartment on Park Avenue. He was also the owner of a small, up-to-date steam yacht, which bore the uncommon name of *The Philosopher's Stone.*

As is usually the case in such places, most of the waiters at the Marmawell Club were foreigners. One among them is worthy of special mention. He was the cardroom waiter, who went by the name of Max Berne, and was understood to hail from that land of model hotel keepers and waiters, Switzerland.

Max evidently had seen a great deal of the world, although he was still a young man. Paris, Berlin, Vienna, Rome, Madrid, St. Petersburg—we beg pardon, Petrograd—mention any of these cities to Max, and he could tell you which was the quickest way of getting there, which were the best hotels to stay at, how much they would charge you, what the cooking was like, and what quality of cigars and wines they stocked.

Needless to say, this made him very popular with the members of the Marmawell. He was, in fact, a perfect encyclopedia of information on all matters relating to the leading cities of Europe, and he could speak French, Italian, and Spanish as fluently as he spoke English.

That evening he was hovering over one of the tables in the deserted cardroom, doing a deft touch here and there, when Atherton walked in.

"Evening, Max!" the social favorite said affably. "Do you know if Mr. Frost is about?"

He referred to Jackson Frost—"Jack Frost," as his friends called him—a young man of excellent family and expensive tastes, who belonged to the so-called "sporting set."

"Yes, sir," replied Max, in his silky, deferential voice. "Mr. Frost is in the writing room. He told me to let him know when you arrived. Shall I tell him you are here, or will you go up to him?"

"Is he alone in the writing room?"

"No, sir—at least, he wasn't when I was there. There were several other gentlemen in the room."

"Then ask him to join me here, and, after you have given him my message, bring me some Scotch."

Max noiselessly retired, and presently returned with the whisky.

"Mr. Frost will be down in a moment, sir," he said, as he placed the articles at Atherton's elbow.

He had scarcely spoken before Jackson Frost appeared, a tall young fellow, faultlessly dressed.

"So, here you are!" he said, addressing Atherton. "A bit late, aren't you?"

Before Atherton could reply, two other members of the club strolled into the room, a fact which brought a frown of annoyance to the man's handsome face.

While the newcomers were giving their orders to Max, the latter stood before them in an attitude of respectful attention. All the time, however, he was straining his ears to catch what was passing between Atherton and Frost.

"Is everything arranged?" he heard the latter ask, in a low tone.

"Yes," Atherton replied. "I came to tell you what the arrangements are, but we can't talk here."

"Come up to my room," suggested Frost. "I'll say I'm going up to dress for dinner, and you can follow me in a few minutes."

"Right," said Atherton. "We'll be safe from interruption there."

By this time the others had given their orders to Max, and one of them turned to Jackson Frost.

"We're trying to make up a four for cards; would you and Mr. Atherton care to join us?"

"Thanks, but I haven't time," said Frost. "I'm dining out to-night, and I'm just going up to my room to change."

"And I'm only staying for a few minutes," put in Atherton. "As a matter of fact, I only dropped in for a drink, and as soon as I've finished it, I'm off. By the way, did I pay you for this Scotch, Max?"

"No, sir," said the waiter.

Atherton paid, and Max left the room.

The club bar was in the basement, but instead of going there to procure the drinks which had been ordered, Max glided to the end of the entrance hall, walked leisurely up one flight of stairs, and then, being out of sight from below, darted up two other flights.

It seemed a curious thing for a cardroom waiter to do. On the fourth floor of the building were quite a number of private rooms, which were reserved by members who wished to have a place where they could spend a night, or where they could change into evening dress—or out of it—without the trouble of going home. One of these rooms—it was number twenty-five—was rented by Jackson Frost.

Reaching this fourth floor, Max did another curious thing—an extremely curious thing for a cardroom waiter to do.

Approaching the door of Frost's room, he drew a bunch of skeleton keys from his pocket, selected one of them, and opened the door. Having gained access to the room, he darted across to the window, opened it an inch or two from the bottom, then hastily retreated, locking the door behind him and hurrying back downstairs.

Halfway down the last flight of stairs, he met Jackson Frost. Max humbly stepped aside to allow Frost to pass, and then went on to the bar, secured the drinks which had been ordered, and took them to the cardroom.

Atherton was still there, but two or three minutes later he rose to his feet, nodded to the two other members, and left the room.

"He's going up to Frost's room," thought the waiter.

He glanced impatiently at his watch. It was five minutes to seven. In five minutes he would be off duty.

"Confound it!" he exclaimed inwardly. "Why couldn't Atherton have waited that long? However, I don't suppose he and Frost will finish their talk in five minutes. All the same, I hope Sachs won't be late to-night."

Sachs was the name of the waiter who was to relieve Max at seven o'clock. He was very punctual as a rule, and this was no exception. Just as the clock was striking seven, he appeared at the cardroom door.

"Anything new, Max?" he asked.

"Nothing," Max answered shortly. "Good night."

"What's your rush?" asked Sachs, with a grin. "You seem to be in a tearing hurry."

"I am," was the answer, and without another word Max left the room.

If he was in such a desperate hurry to be off, though, one would have expected him to go straight down to the waiters' room, change his clothes, and leave the premises, but, instead of doing this, he repeated most of his curious performances of a few minutes earlier.

That is to say, he dawdled up the first flight of stairs, and then, as soon as he was out of sight of those in the entrance hall, he darted up to the fourth floor.

With catlike steps he glided to the door of room No. 25, and stood for a moment in a listening attitude.

A murmur of voices inside the room told him that Atherton and Frost were there. He could not hear what they were saying, but he had anticipated that, and that was why he had opened the window of Frost's room.

Having satisfied himself of the whereabouts of the two, he stole to the door of number twenty-seven, adjoining, picked the lock, glided into the room, and closed the door behind him.

Groping his way softly along the dark room, he quietly opened the window and stepped out on the fire escape.

The platform of the fire escape extended from the window of number twenty-seven to that of number twenty-five, and all Max had to do was to creep along the iron grating until he was beside the window with which he had previously tampered.

When he reached it, he crouched down, hidden by the dark shade which had been drawn, and put his ear close to the crack.

He could now hear every word that was spoken, and, it was plain to be seen, it afforded him the liveliest satisfaction.

"So I was right!" he thought triumphantly. "I suspected it for some time, but now I know it. I must have some more tangible proof, though. I must see the thing done, and find out who else is in the plot. And then—farewell to the old Mar, and hurrah for a life of ease and luxury."

CHAPTER II.

THE WAITER HAS A WIFE.

The waiter remained outside the window until he heard Atherton leave the room, then he stole back to number twenty-seven, left things exactly as he had found them, and descended to the waiters' room, where he changed to street attire.

Ten minutes later he left the premises, and at the end of half an hour he let himself into a modest little flat in a "model" tenement house on East Seventy-seventh Street, near the river.

Here he proceeded to do other things which were out of the ordinary for a club waiter.

For instance, he changed his clothes once more, and, after he had done so, he loaded a revolver and stowed it away in one of his pockets. He put a fresh battery into an electric flash light, and slipped that into another pocket.

He next went down to a room in the basement, in which a motor cycle was stored, and he spent half an hour in pumping up the tires, tinkering with the lamp, oiling the bearings, filling the tank, and generally putting the machine in order for a run.

Finally he returned to the little sitting room, set out a frugal supper for two, consisting of cold beef and potato salad from a delicatessen store, bread and cheese, and a bottle of first-class claret—the last named being from the cellars of the Marmawell.

When all these preparations were completed, he lighted a pipe and consulted his watch.

"Half past nine," he mused. "I needn't start for the theater for another hour yet."

He opened a black leather case and drew out a well-worn mandolin. Dropping into an easy-chair, he started to play the instrument in a fashion which proved that he was both a passionate lover of music and a capable performer.

Any one popping into the little room and seeing him leaning back in that easy-chair, with a far-away, dreamy look in his half-closed eyes, and a rapt expression on his face, would have found it hard to believe that he was capable of the side he had shown shortly before.

To say the least, he must have been a curious combination of the poetic and the matter of fact, of the dreamer and the doer, otherwise that revolver in his pocket, for instance, was decidedly out of place.

Such was the case, and, moreover, the man had had many ups and downs, which his pretty wife had shared.

The latter was an American girl, who had married him some five years before, and who now—because funds were low—had returned to her former calling. In other words, she was back on the stage, in the chorus of a Broadway production.

Elaine Stowe was the name by which she was professionally known.

Max was a most devoted husband, and never allowed his young wife to return from the theater alone. As a rule, he left the flat about half past ten, and was waiting at the stage door when Elaine came out.

To-night, however, he was so absorbed in his mandolin—and in other things—that he forgot all about the flight of time, and he was positively amazed when the door opened and there walked into the room a remarkably attractive and well-formed young woman, cheaply but effectively dressed, with an innocent, babyish face lighted by a pair of big blue eyes.

"Elaine!" he ejaculated, jumping up and laying his instrument aside. "Why are you home so early to-night?"

"Early!" the girl echoed with a laugh, unbuttoning her gloves. "Do you call half past eleven early?"

"Never!" he cried, dragging out his watch. "By George, so it is! What a thoughtless brute I am to let you come home alone. I fully intended to come for you as usual, but I just sat down to play for an hour, and the combination of the music and my plans for the future made me forget everything else."

"Your plans for the future?" Elaine repeated, with just a touch of irony in her voice. "More plans of making our fortunes, I suppose?"

Her husband nodded.

"Yes," he answered. "I know what you think, but you're wrong this time, as it happens. These plans are the real thing, and I'm going to put them through."

Elaine shrugged her dainty shoulders.

"I wonder how often I've heard that," she said wistfully. "We're always going to make our fortunes, but somehow or other something always turns up at the last moment and messes up our schemes."

"I'll tell you while we're having supper," Max replied. "I haven't too much time, for I must start in three-quarters of an hour."

"Start? Where are you going?" his wife asked curiously, as she removed her hat and coat.

"That doesn't come until almost the end of the story," was the answer. "Sit down and you'll hear it all."

The girl obeyed wonderingly, and Max began.

"Do you remember," he said, "that very shortly after I started work at the Marmawell, I told you I had a suspicion that Alfred Knox Atherton was more or less crooked?"

"Yes," answered Elaine, "you've said so often, and you made the same statement about another member of the club—Frost, I think was the name. You told me you thought he was so crooked that if he ever fell out of bed he could rock himself to sleep on the floor."

"That's right," agreed the waiter, with an appreciative grin. "I couldn't give you any reason for my suspicions, though. It was just instinct, I guess. You know the old saying, 'set a thief to catch a thief.' It must have been that. Being a rogue myself, I instinctively spotted a fellow rogue when I saw him. Anyhow, I was convinced that Atherton and 'Jack Frost,' as they call him, were playing some deep game of a crooked nature, and I determined to find out what it was."

"And have you found out?" asked Elaine.

"I certainly have, and it is a deeper game and a more crooked one than ever I dreamed of."

"This sounds interesting," remarked the girl, pouring out a glass of wine for herself. "Do tell me what you have discovered."

"Well, about half past six this evening," her husband explained, "Frost came to the club and asked me if Atherton was there. When I told him he was not, he said he would go up to the writing room, and I was to let him know when Atherton arrived. There was nothing much in that, of course, but it showed me that Atherton and Frost had arranged to meet at the club this evening.

"Presently Atherton put in an appearance. He came into the cardroom, which was deserted at the time, and asked me if Frost was about. I told him Frost was in the writing room, and asked him if he would go up. His answer showed me that he wished to see Frost alone, for he asked me if there was anybody else in the writing room, and when I said there was, he told me to tell Frost to come down to the cardroom. It was plainer than ever that they shared some secret, so naturally I determined by hook or crook to hear what they had to say to each other.

"I delivered Atherton's message to Frost, and the latter came down to the cardroom. Before he had a chance to say anything of a personal nature to Atherton, however, a couple of other men walked in, and I saw Atherton scowl at them.

"While I was taking their orders, I kept my ears open, and heard Atherton and Frost arrange to meet in the latter's private room upstairs.

"As soon as I got that tip, I slipped upstairs, used a skeleton key on Frost's door, and opened his window a little from the bottom. I passed Frost on the lower flight, and a few minutes later Atherton left the cardroom and went upstairs.

"That was five minutes to seven, and at seven I was relieved. The moment I was free I sneaked upstairs once more, and made use of the room adjoining Frost's. By picking the lock of that room, and softly opening the window, I managed to get out on the fire escape, and in that way reached Frost's window. The crack I had left

made it possible for me to hear every word they said, without the risk of being seen."

"Very clever!" commented Elaine. "And what did you hear?"

CHAPTER III.

"GOOD-BY TO THE SIMPLE LIFE!"

He told her what he had heard, and her big, blue eyes grew bigger still with incredulous amazement.

"You take my breath away!" she gasped. "Alfred Knox Atherton, one of the idols of New York society, who is hand in glove with most of the 'big bugs'! It sounds unbelievable."

"It's a bit of an eye opener, isn't it?" chuckled the waiter. "What a sensation I could create if I hunted up a reporter and filled him up with the details of that little conversation in Frost's room! But, of course, I'm not going to do anything of the kind. It's too good a thing to give away. It's a veritable gold mine, and I'm going to work it for all it's worth."

"Blackmail, I suppose?" the girl suggested calmly. "You will interview Mr. Atherton and tell him what you have discovered, and threaten to expose him unless he buys your silence?"

"Not so fast, my dear! That's not quite the idea. I shall certainly interview Atherton and tell him what I have discovered, but instead of demanding money as the price of my silence, I shall demand a place in the firm. In other words, I shall say to Atherton: 'I know everything. Let me stand in with you and share the loot, or I'll give away the show!'"

The girl nodded approvingly.

"Yes, that will be much better than merely demanding money," she said.

"You bet your life it will!" declared her husband, and it was curious to note that he seemed perfectly at home with American slang. Indeed, there was nothing suggestive of Switzerland about him now. "Instead of a lump sum," he went on, "it means a comfortable income for the rest of our lives. Better still, it means action, excitement, risk. Perhaps, even the chance of a tussle with Nick Carter."

Elaine shivered at the mention of the great detective's name, but the man laughed light-heartedly.

"You don't like to hear that name?" he asked teasingly.

"I don't," his wife confessed. "Nick Carter has never really caught us, but he's spoiled more than one pretty plan of ours," and he has always seemed a sort of bogy man to me. I wish you hadn't mentioned him just now, and I don't see how you can think of him at such a time—at least, how you can make a joke of it. Whenever Nick Carter comes to my mind, I find my courage oozing out, and my feet getting cold."

Her husband leaned over the corner of the table, gave her a great hug, and kissed her.

"Cheer up, little girl!" he said. "Nick Carter isn't going to hurt you. Trust me for that."

"But what if he catches you? Could anything hurt me more than that?"

"But he isn't going to catch me, dear. I'll admit that he hasn't really tried as yet, but I'm perfectly ready to have him do it. He's certainly a wonder, but I think I can tie him up in a knot, and I like to think of him when I'm planning to turn a trick. It puts me on my mettle, and makes me plan more carefully than I otherwise might. Therefore, I'm really glad he's on the job. You mustn't have such fancies. They're no real part of you. You're the pluckiest girl who ever bucked up against the law, and you know you would tackle anything."

Elaine's smile was serious.

"I've proved that I'm not a coward, and I like excitement as well as you do. I come nearer being afraid of Nick Carter, though, than of anybody else. He's been so successful. They say he never really went after a crook, big or little, without getting him in the end, no matter how long it took."

Max reseated himself again.

"The longest string of victories is sometimes broken," he said confidently. "There's no doubt that Carter has set a hot pace, but he can't keep it up. Somebody is going to spoil his record some of these days—and why not yours truly?"

The girl shrugged her shoulders.

"I know there's no use of arguing with you," she said. "I wouldn't have you different, anyway. If you weren't so sure of yourself, you couldn't have done half the things you've done, and very likely you wouldn't have won me, either. Tell me this, though: Supposing Mr. Atherton tries to bluff you when you go to see him? Supposing he indignantly denies your charge, and orders you to leave the house, and all that sort of thing, what will you do? You see, you can't prove that he and Mr. Frost are leading this double life. You were alone when you listened to their talk this evening, and if they both deny that they said what you say they did, you have no witness to bring forward."

"Don't you fret. I've thought of that," the man informed her. "Before I pay that little call on Atherton, I'm going to have positive proof of his guilt, and I'm going to know who his other accomplices are."

"But how can you obtain such a proof?"

"By going to Freehold. It's now ten minutes to twelve, and the job is fixed for three o'clock in the morning. I have tuned up my motor bike, and everything is ready. If I leave here about quarter after twelve, I ought to reach Freehold easily by two o'clock.

"When I do so," he continued, "I shall hide my machine, and keep watch on the Meadowview house. When I have seen all I want to see, I'll come back here, and to-morrow I'll interview Atherton. He'll have to accept my terms when he finds out what I know, and then——"

He refilled his glass, and surveyed it with the critical eye of a connoisseur.

"Good-by to the Marmawell!" he said. "Good-by to the front row of the chorus! Good-by to the simple life in a tenement house! Exit all the things we hate, and enter all the things we love—ease and wealth and luxury!"

He drained the glass, and, twenty minutes later, mounted on his motor cycle, started for Long Island.

CHAPTER IV.

LATE HOURS AT MEADOWVIEW.

Freehold is a sleepy little village on Long Island. It has no railway stations, and its chief claim to distinction rests on the fact that it is intimately associated with the life of a revolutionary hero.

We are speaking now of the village itself, not of its

important neighborhood, for the latter boasts of more than one pretentious country house.

One of these is known far and wide as Meadowview. It's a great pile of white sandstone, which was built in 1900 by Charles P. Massey, a millionaire banker.

The elder Massey died soon after Meadowview was completed, and it passed into the possession of his son, Francis Massey, who was himself nearing middle age.

At the time of which we write, the great house was occupied by Francis Massey, his wife, two grown daughters, and a large staff of servants.

Meadowview was distant about a mile and a half from Freehold, and was surrounded by spacious grounds.

These grounds were inclosed by a high stone wall, which divided them on two sides from the neighboring estates, on a third from a turnpike much favored by motorists, and on a fourth side from a narrow country lane.

The clock in the tower in one of Freehold's churches was chiming a quarter to two when Max Berne, seated on his motor cycle, sped swiftly up the main street of the little village.

At that late—or early—hour, it need hardly be said that the inhabitants were all in bed. Some wakeful women may possibly have heard the clatter of his engine, but nobody saw him as he passed through the village, continued along the road for a mile and a half, and eventually into a narrow lane already mentioned.

"This is the lane Atherton spoke of, without a doubt," he murmured, as he dismounted from his machine. "Now, to find the door."

He started to walk up the deserted road, pushing his motor cycle in front of him. On one side was a low fence, overhung here and there by low trees and bushes; on the other side was a high stone wall, which marked the boundary of the Massey place.

The night was pitch dark, but his bicycle lamp gave him all the light he required. Presently, after walking a few hundred yards, he found what he was looking for—a wooden door let into the stone wall.

Having ascertained that the door was locked, he wheeled his machine across the road, set it up against the low bank just outside the fence, and cut a large branch from a neighboring tree. Armed with this branch, which was covered with leaves, he returned to the motor cycle and screened it in such a way that the foliage seemed to belong to a bush growing out from the side of the bank.

"That was a happy thought of mine," he told himself. "It wouldn't have been easy to lift the machine over the fence, and there isn't any natural shelter for it this side—at least, there's none near enough to the gate to suit me."

Before hiding the motor cycle in this way, he had extinguished the light. Now he retraced his steps to the wooden door, turned the lock with the skeleton key, and stepped into the well-kept grounds.

He closed and locked the door behind him, after which he drew out his electric torch. A momentary flash revealed the fact that a footpath started at the door and ran through the grounds, doubtless in the direction of the house.

"Just as Atherton said," he muttered. "Now, shall I wait here until they arrive, or shall I spend the interval in having a look at the outside of the house?"

He consulted his watch.

"Two o'clock," he soliloquized. "They won't be here for an hour yet. I'll stroll up to the house, and then come back and wait for them."

So numerous and closely planted were the trees that even if it had been lighted, the intruder could not have seen the house from where he stood. In fact, it was not until he had groped his way along the path for three or four hundred yards that he suddenly emerged from among the trees, and found himself in full view of the front of the house.

It was an imposing frontage, four stories high, and was approached from the main gates by a long, straight drive. A balustraded terrace ran along the whole front of the building, and outside the principal door were a handsome stone porch and a broad flight of steps.

At such an hour the waiter had naturally expected to find the house in darkness, and all its occupants in bed. Judge then of his surprise, to say nothing of his dismay, when he saw that a light was burning in the entrance hall, that the front door was wide open, and that two men—they appeared to be a butler and a footman—were standing on the porch.

"Jerusalem!" he exclaimed, whistling softly to himself. "This looks as if Atherton's calculations had miscarried. He and his pals will certainly have to postpone their little enterprise, or else they'll find themselves——"

His musings ended in a startled gasp, for at that moment his quick ears caught a sound which filled him with added dismay.

It was the distant chug-chug of a motor car, faint and far off at first, but growing louder and louder every moment.

CHAPTER V.

"HERE THEY COME."

"Alfred Atherton and his bunch!" muttered Max, quivering with suppressed excitement. "They must have changed their plans at the last moment. I distinctly heard Atherton say to Frost that they would reach here about three o'clock, and it's just after two now. Of course, they won't be able to tackle the job under the circumstances. When they discover that the people in the house are astir, they'll give up the attempt, and hotfoot it back to the big town—if they don't blunder into hot water before they get wise.

"However," he added to himself, "they won't find out the state of affairs until they've entered the grounds through that door in the wall and followed the footpath to this spot. Consequently, if I hide behind these bushes, I shall be able to see who they are and hear what they say."

He glided toward a neighboring clump of bushes, and was about to crouch down behind them when a pair of great, flashing eyes came into view at the foot of the drive. In other words, the car which he had heard had just turned in at the main gates of Meadowview.

For a moment, but only for a moment, Max was completely taken aback, then the truth dawned on him, and the look of bewilderment vanished from his face.

"I see the point," he thought. "This isn't Atherton, it must be Massey himself and his womenfolk coming back from the opera. Atherton told Frost that they would probably arrive about half past twelve, but they must

have had a breakdown. At any rate, they're an hour and a half late."

The waiter was right. Earlier in the evening Mr. and Mrs. Massey and their two daughters had motored to New York in order to attend the closing performance at the Metropolitan. They had started back for Freehold shortly after eleven, but engine trouble had delayed them for over an hour, and later they had had the bad luck of a blow-out, so that instead of reaching the house about half past twelve, they had not arrived until just after two.

The car, which was a closed one, swept up the drive, and halted before the entrance. The butler and the footman hurried down the steps, and the latter opened the door of the car. The first to alight was a middle-aged man in evening dress, who the waiter rightly guessed was Francis Massey.

"Here we are at last!" Max heard him say. "Did you think we were lost?"

"We were beginning to grow anxious, sir," replied the butler. "James and I were just discussing whether we ought not to set out in search of you. Have you had an accident, sir?"

"Nothing but a blow-out and a cranky engine," was the reply. "Are the rest of the servants in bed?"

"Yes, sir."

"Well, you and James can follow their example as soon as you've locked up. We don't want any supper. We're all tired out, and we're going straight to bed."

While he was speaking, he had assisted his wife and daughters to alight. As they passed up the steps and into the house, the waiter saw that each of the three ladies was wearing quantities of jewels in their hair, at their throats, and on their fingers. Lustrous pearls glowed softly, and priceless diamonds scintillated.

How the waiter's eyes sparkled at the sight! He had often heard of the famous Massey jewels—collected in all parts of the world by the late Charles P. Massey—but never before had he seen them, and now that he saw them, he was only too ready to believe that popular rumor had not exaggerated when it estimated their value at nearly half a million.

"Atherton was right," he muttered, under his breath. "A prize like that is worth the risk, even if the risk were ten times greater than it is."

By this time the Masseys had entered the house, and the butler had followed them. The footman exchanged a few words with the chauffeur, then he, too, disappeared, closing and locking the door behind him. The driver slipped in his clutch—the engine was still running—and a moment later the car vanished round the end of the house on its way to the garage at the back.

Max glanced at his watch again, and thoughtfully rubbed his chin.

"This is shaving it pretty closely," he thought. "Atherton calculated that everybody would be fast asleep by half past one at latest, but it will be nearly quarter to three at this rate before they quiet down. And those fellows will be here at three."

He shook his head.

"I'm afraid it can't be done to-night," his thoughts ran on. "However, I may as well wait until they show up, and see what happens."

The front of the house was all in darkness now, but presently lights appeared in three of the bedroom windows.

"So they've gone straight to their rooms, as Massey said," soliloquized the waiter, "but surely he'll lock up the jewels before he turns in. Atherton said he always did——"

The sentence was left unfinished, for at that moment lights sprang up in the entrance hall once more, and a little later one of the windows on the ground floor was illuminated.

Curtains were drawn across the window, but they did not completely cover it, and, after a moment's hesitation, Max stole up on the terrace and cautiously peered through into the room.

Its fittings indicated that it was a combination of library and study—evidently Massey's den or office. Books lined the walls, there was a big flat desk in the center, and a small safe to one side.

At the moment when the lurking waiter peered into the room, Massey was in the act of opening the door of this safe. On a chair by his side was a tray, and on this tray lay a pile of leather cases, the appearance of which proclaimed that they contained the articles of jewelry which had recently adorned his wife and daughters, and which they must have turned over to him to lock up in the safe.

It goes without saying that the jewels were not kept permanently in this safe. They were stored, as a rule, in the safe-deposit vaults connected with Massey's bank in New York. They had been brought from the bank that afternoon, however, in order that Mrs. Massey and her daughters might wear them at the opera, and doubtless they would be taken to the bank the next day.

In the meantime, for one night only, they were to repose in the safe at Meadowview. Plainly, that situation was the one for which Atherton had been waiting, and of which he had received advance information, thanks to his wife and intimate acquaintance with wealth and aristocracy.

Little dreaming that two keen eyes were watching his every movement, Massey placed the cases in the safe, closed the door, scattered the combination, and left the room after switching off the lights.

A few moments later the light in the entrance hall went out, then, one by one, the bedroom lights were extinguished, and the stately house wrapped itself in darkness and silence.

Max had returned to his chosen hiding place in the bushes, and crouched down there. Now, turning his back to the house, he pressed the button of his flash light and turned the white rays on the face of his watch for a moment.

"Twenty minutes to three," he mused. "Perhaps, after all, they may be asleep by three o'clock. Anyhow, it's Atherton's risk, not mine. I think I'll go and post myself where I can see them when they arrive."

He retraced his steps along the footpath, until he came to the door which opened into the lane.

As already mentioned, there were many trees at that point, and one of them stood a couple of yards to the right of the door, and quite close to the wall.

"What is the matter with taking a reserve seat up there," Max muttered. "I shall then be able to see in the road without going outside the wall, and without being seen myself."

He climbed the tree, and flattened himself along one of the lower branches, from which point of vantage he could command a view not only of the road, but of the footpath through the trees.

Ten minutes passed, then a faint, pulsating sound, like the purring of some gigantic cat fell on his ears.

"Here they come!" he told himself. "They've evidently got a first-class silencer on their car, and ten to one they're driving without lights."

CHAPTER VI.

THE WAITER MEETS WITH A SURPRISE.

Soon Max heard the approaching car turn out of the main road into the lane, and a moment or two later he could dimly see a bulky, shadowy object gliding up the latter.

"Stop!" said a cautious voice, which the waiter instantly recognized as that of Alfred Atherton. "Here's the door, I think. You can switch on the light for a moment now, for there'll be nobody about at this hour of the morning."

The electric searchlights of the car flashed out, and by their dazzling illumination the waiter saw that the car was a big, open touring car, and contained five men. The front seat was occupied by the chauffeur—who was a stranger to Max—and Atherton. In the rear seat were three other men, all of whom, strangely enough, were known by sight and reputation to the man in the tree.

One of them, of course, was Jack Frost, the well-groomed man about town, whom Max had seen at the Marmawell Club a few hours earlier. His presence in the machine was no surprise to the waiter, for he had expected to see him there, but, at the sight of the other two, Max had hard work to suppress an exclamation of incredulous amazement.

The distinguished-looking man who was seated on Frost's right was the famous Professor Tufts, a scientist of country-wide reputation. The little man with the crafty face, who was seated on Frost's left, was the well-known society lawyer, named Frank Kinsley, who was popularly supposed to know more of the family secrets of the "Four Hundred" than any man in New York.

"Well, I'll be hanged!" was the waiter's inward declaration, as he restrained himself with an effort from making a start that might have dislodged him from his precarious position. "It was enough of a poser to discover that Alfred Knox Atherton and Jackson Frost were engaged in this sort of game, but Professor Tufts and Kinsley—that's enough to take one's breath away!"

Atherton stepped out of the car, and the others, except the chauffeur, followed suit.

"Yes, this is the door," said the former, producing a bunch of skeleton keys. "Get out the things while I manipulate this lock."

While Frost and Professor Tufts were lifting out an oblong case and a leather bag from the back of the car, Atherton picked the lock and opened the door.

"We'd better put on our masks now," he said. "I don't suppose we'll meet anybody, but it's just as well to be on the safe side."

Each of the four men produced a mask of black silk, and adjusted it over the lower part of his face.

"Put out those lights now," ordered their leader, turning to the driver. "You know your orders. See that you obey them, and, above all, remember to keep your engine running, and if you hear any disturbance, have everything ready for flight the instant we return."

The chauffeur switched off the electric lights, and a moment later Atherton and his three companions were walking slowly in single file along the footpath toward the house.

Atherton led the way with a small electric torch in his hand, which he turned on for a moment now and then. Professor Tufts came next, carrying the wooden case. Frost followed with the leather bag, and the lawyer brought up the rear.

The waiter remained where he was until the sound of their footsteps had died away, then, with no more noise than a cat would have made, he slipped down the tree and glided after them.

By the time he came in sight of the house, Atherton had forced the catch of the study window—a French window—and he and his three companions were in the act of stealing into the room.

Kinsley was the last to enter, and as soon as he was inside, the curtains were again drawn across the window, but it was left open.

For five or ten minutes Max Berne stood at the edge of the open space, staring at the open window. Then his curiosity overmastered him, he crept up on the terrace, fell on his hands and knees outside the window, and cautiously raised the lower edge of the curtain.

What he saw caused him no surprise, for it was what he had expected to see.

Out of the wooden case Professor Tufts had taken an ingenious little apparatus, of which the essential feature was an oxyhydrogen blowpipe. With the assistance of his companions he was directing the flame to that part of the safe door which surrounded the lock.

So intense was the heat of the flame, that it melted the steel as easily as a hot knife cuts through butter. In an incredibly short time a circular hole had been cut through the door. A minute or two later the safe was open, and Kinsley and Frost were about to pack the cases of jewelry into the leather box.

Suddenly the waiter saw something which almost caused his heart to stop beating.

CHAPTER VII.

A SHOT FROM THE DARK.

The study door was opposite the window. It was shut, but not locked, of course, and all at once Max saw a knob begin to turn.

Apparently it made no sound, for the four men went on with their work—the lawyer and Frost opening the bag preparatory to putting the jewel cases into it, and Atherton and Professor Tufts stowing away the apparatus in its case.

Every fiber of the waiter's being tingled with suppressed excitement. It was only too plain that somebody was outside the door, preparing to burst in and take the burglars by surprise.

What ought he to do? Should he call out and warn them of their danger? Should he make his own escape before the storm burst?

He had no time to decide, for all at once, with dramatic

suddenness, the door was flung open, and Francis Massey sprang into the room clad in dressing gown and slippers, and armed with a revolver.

"Hands up, if you don't want a bullet in you!" he cried, leveling his weapon at Atherton with one hand, while with the other he pressed the switch beside the door and flooded the room with light.

The intruders had been content with their electric torches and the brilliant flame of the blowpipe.

With simultaneous cries of dismay the four men spun around and faced the owner of the house.

"Stop that instantly, or I'll fire!" cried the latter, as Atherton's hand stole toward his pocket. "Put your hands up, all of you! This revolver is loaded in every chamber, and as you may be aware, I have some little reputation as a crack shot."

This was true enough, for Francis Massey had been a famous sportsman in his younger days, and was still an expert with the revolver.

Half the length of the room separated him from the four men, and if they had attempted to rush him, he could have—and probably would have—dropped all four of them before they could have reached him.

"That's better!" he said grimly, as the quartet quickly raised their hands above their heads. "Now, kindly oblige me by walking backward and standing with your backs to that wall behind you. Be quick about it!"

The waiter outside could have laughed at the ignominious spectacle presented by the four masked burglars as they silently and sullenly shuffled backward, and ranged themselves in a line against the wall.

Although the scene appealed to his sense of humor, it also had its serious side—even from Max's point of view.

All his plans for the future would be ruined if these men were captured and their identity unmasked. At any rate, they must be allowed to escape, and, after a moment's hurried thought, the waiter drew out his own revolver and cautiously pushed the muzzle under the lower edge of the curtain.

"Massey doesn't happen to be the only crack shot on hand," he told himself.

"I'm now going to ring for help," the millionaire announced, moving slowly toward an electric button set into his desk. "You'll remain just where you are until the servants come, and the very first man among you who attempts to play any tricks will be shot down like a dog, without any further——"

Crack!

At that moment Max Berne pressed the trigger of his revolver, and the bullet, true to its aim, struck Massey on the wrist, shattering the bone and causing him to drop the weapon with an involuntary howl of pain.

What happened next the waiter did not stop to see. As soon as he had fired and had thereby given Atherton and his companions a chance to make their escape, he leaped to his feet and dashed off in the direction of the wooden door, which opened into the lane.

Long before he reached the door, he heard the four men racing across in the same direction. As he did not wish them to see him, however, he hid himself behind some bushes, but as soon as they had passed him, he emerged from his hiding place, and followed them at a little distance.

Meanwhile, the report of the revolver had aroused the occupants of the house, and by the time Max reached the door in the wall, he could hear the servants running out of the house and calling to one another through the darkness.

By that time, though, Atherton and the others had scrambled into their machine, and the car was halfway down the lane.

Swiftly, yet without any trace of flurry, the waiter darted across the road, snatched away the screen of leaves from his motor cycle, and wheeled the machine into the lane.

While he was starting the engine, he heard a number of servants running toward the door, and, just as he mounted, two of them dashed out.

"Here's one of them!" called the foremost servant, and, as he uttered the words, he rushed at Max and tried to seize him by the arm.

A blow in the mouth, however, sent him reeling back into the arms of the other servants, and the next instant the waiter was scorching down the lane at a speed which defied pursuit.

Half an hour later, after passing through Freehold, Berne caught sight of the tail lights of Atherton's car. He easily could have overtaken it had he wished, but he preferred to follow it at a respectful distance.

Eventually, to make a long story short, he saw it thread its way through the outlying districts of Long Island City, across the Queensborough Bridge, and plunge into the narrow streets of the East Side.

Even then he did not leave the trail, but followed until the big car drew up in front of the huge apartment house in which Alfred Atherton maintained his luxurious bachelor quarters.

As the leader of the kid-gloved crooks alighted from the car, Max Berne rattled past on his motor cycle.

He could not resist the temptation.

"Good night, Mr. Atherton," he called out.

The society man wheeled about with thumping heart, but was too late to see more than the cyclist's back.

"That will give him something to think about!" murmured the waiter. "I hope he hasn't got a weak heart!"

"Great heavens!" ejaculated the startled Atherton. "Who was that, and how long has he been following us?"

But none of the others could say, and although they tried to shake off the uneasy feeling it gave them, they were not altogether successful.

CHAPTER VIII.

A DARING VENTURE.

About quarter of two the following afternoon, Alfred Knox Atherton descended in the elevator of the big apartment house, and was about to enter his handsome electric coupé when Max Berne stepped up to him and respectfully raised his hat.

"Hello, Max!" Atherton exclaimed good-naturedly. "What are you doing here? Brought me a message from the club?"

"No, sir," replied the waiter. "I've left the Marmawell. I gave up my position this morning, and paid them a month's wages in lieu of notice."

"I'm very sorry to hear that," declared Atherton. "We shall miss you greatly. You've got another and better job, I suppose?"

"Not yet, sir, but with your assistance I hope to get a very much better job. That's why I've come to you now."

"I see. Well, I will be very glad to do what I can to help you, but I'm sorry to say that I cannot talk with you now. I'm just off to lunch with Professor Tufts. Call again this evening between seven and eight, and we'll talk the matter over."

"Thank you, sir, but I can't wait until this evening. I must see you now."

Atherton raised his brows.

"Must!" he repeated. "Really, Max, you're forgetting yourself. That's hardly the way to speak to me, if you desire my help. However, I don't suppose you meant to be impertinent."

"Not at all," was the reply. "All the same, sir, I repeat that I must see you now."

"And I repeat that I can't and won't see you!" Atherton replied, growing angry.

"I think you will, sir," Berne assured him suavely.

"And why, pray?" demanded the society man.

The waiter came a step or two nearer, so that the chauffeur could not hear.

"I was at Meadowview at three o'clock this morning," he murmured.

Alfred Atherton went suddenly white, but he recovered himself almost instantly.

"I don't know what you're talking about," he said, "but as you seem to think you do, I suppose I can give you five minutes. Come along."

Without another word he led the way into the building, and entered the waiting elevator. They were shot up a few floors, and Max Berne was ushered into a luxuriously furnished room overlooking the wide avenue.

"Will you sit down?" Atherton asked, in tones of icy politeness.

He pointed to a chair in the middle of the room, but his visitor smilingly shook his head and seated himself at one of the windows.

"This will suit me better, I think," the waiter answered blandly. "It will be easier for me to attract the attention of the people in the street—if I need to. Also," he added, as he drew a loaded revolver from his pocket, "I shall feel more at home if I hold this in my hand while I talk."

Atherton shrugged his shoulders and seated himself in the chair which he had offered to the waiter.

"Well, I'm waiting to hear why you have come to see me," he said coldly. "Please be as brief as you can, for I can only spare you five minutes."

Max assumed an air of injured innocence.

"What an ungrateful world it is!" he remarked, with a sigh. "Surely, I deserve a more cordial reception than this, considering the fact that only about twelve hours ago I saved you from arrest and ruin."

Atherton gave a perceptible start.

"What do you mean?" he asked quickly.

"I mean," was the reply, "that it was I who fired that bullet which smashed Francis Massey's wrist, and enabled you and your friends to escape."

His host jumped to his feet and planted himself in front of Max.

"Is that true?" he demanded.

The waiter nodded.

"I was crouching outside the study window," he explained, "when Massey burst into the room and covered you with his revolver. I slipped my own gun under the curtain, and drew a bead on him."

"But why were you outside the window? What were you doing at Massey's place at that hour?"

"It's rather a long story," Berne drawled. "If you'll sit down again, I'll tell you all about it."

Atherton hesitated, staring at him, then resumed his seat.

Max began by explaining how for some time past he had suspected that Atherton and Frost were "in the know," how he had kept watch on them, and how he had listened to their conversation in Frost's room at the Marmawell.

"I need not tell you," he continued, "that what I heard more than confirmed my previous suspicions. I heard you tell Mr. Frost that you had ascertained that Massey had sent to the bank for the family jewels, and that his wife and daughters were going to wear them at the opera last night. You calculated, you said, that they would return to Meadowview about half past twelve, and that the stuff would be deposited for the night in the safe in Massey's study.

"You explained to Mr. Frost that there was a deserted lane on the north side of the grounds, and that there was a wooden door about in the middle of the wall on that side, from which the footpath led round to the front of the house. You told him to be at your apartment at twelve o'clock, and you said you and he and the other two—those were your words, but you didn't mention any names—would motor out to Meadowview, reaching there about three. You said you would leave the car in the lane in charge of the chauffeur, while the four of you broke into the study, forced the safe, and made away with the sparklers.

"From certain other remarks which you let fall," the waiter went on, "I gathered that this was not the first job of the kind on which you and Frost had been engaged. In fact, I came to the conclusion that you and he were members of an organized gang—a secret society, or something of that sort—which had been carrying on a systematic campaign of robbery. At any rate, I realized that I had made a discovery which ought to be worth a great deal of money to me, but before interviewing you and laying my terms before you, I decided to go to Meadowview, partly to find out who the other two were, and partly to see you actually commit the burglary."

He described his visit to the Massey country place and all that he had seen and done there.

"After I had winged Massey," he concluded, "I hid behind some bushes until you and your friends had entered your car. I then mounted my motor bike, and followed you back to the city. You may possibly remember that just after you had got out of the machine in front of the building, a motorcyclist passed you and called out 'good night.' No doubt you wondered who it was. Now you know. It was I."

"A very interesting story," Atherton commented sarcastically, as his visitor paused. "May I ask you why you were good enough to fire at Massey, and so enable us to make our escape?"

"That's plain enough, isn't it? If you had been captured, all my plans for making money out of my discovery would have been ruined."

"So I thought. Very well. We'll get down to business. You spoke just now of laying your terms before me. That means, I take it, that you wish me to purchase your silence?"

"Naturally."

"In other words—blackmail! Unless I buy your silence, you denounce me and my friends to the police?"

"Blackmail is an ugly word, Mr. Atherton, and I should prefer not to have it brought into this discussion. I certainly intend to denounce you to the police, if you're foolish enough to reject my terms, but I haven't come here to demand money as the price of my silence."

"Then what do you want?"

CHAPTER IX.

MAX REVEALS HIMSELF.

"I want to become a member of your gang, or organization, or secret society, or whatever you call it," Max informed him coolly. "I want to share your excitements, your risks, and your plunder. That's all I ask. Take me into partnership, and you'll not only secure my silence about last night, but you'll also have enlisted a valuable and experienced recruit, though I say it myself."

Alfred Atherton rose to his feet and paced the room for a moment or two. At length he halted and once more planted himself in front of his caller.

"You're a remarkable fellow, Max," he said, with just a suspicion of irony in his voice. "By your unaided wit you have discovered what all the trained intelligence of the police has failed to discover, or even to suspect. I congratulate you.

"You're quite right," he went on. "Frost and Kinsley and Tufts and myself are all members of a secret society, which obtains its revenues from the public by means of burglary, arson, forgery, impersonation, and similar unconventional methods. The society was founded by myself some years ago, and I have the honor of being its president.

"At first it consisted of less than a dozen members, but at the present time it numbers over a hundred. At first we did not bother about a name for it, but one day, in a fit of jocular inspiration, I christened it 'The Order of the Philosopher's Stone,' and the name has stuck to it ever since."

"A curious name," suggested Max. "What made you choose a name like that?"

"You're an intelligent fellow, and you seem to be well read," was the answer. "Doubtless, therefore, you'll remember that the 'Philosopher's Stone' was the name given by the alchemists of the middle ages to the touchstone for which they were always searching, and which they believed would change the baser metals into gold. Well, all our members are very fond of gold, and everything which can be converted into gold—the Massey jewels, for instance—so what better name could I have found for our organization?"

"*The Philosopher's Stone* is also the name of your yacht, isn't it?"

"Yes, but the yacht really isn't mine. Strictly speaking, it belongs to the society, and is chiefly used for the purpose of smuggling our loot out of the country. The officers and crew are all members of the organization, of course, and so are the servants in this apartment."

He paused, and regarded Max Berne with a mocking smile.

"And so are the servants in this apartment," he repeated meaningly. "As I said just now, my dear Max, you're a remarkably clever fellow in your way, but doesn't it begin to strike you that you were rather foolish to come here and threaten me?"

"No, I can't say that it does," was the calm reply.

Atherton shrugged his shoulders.

"Then you're not as bright as I thought you were," he declared. "I've been very frank and open with you. I've admitted that I'm a criminal; I've involved the most important members of our board of directors, and I've told you quite a lot about the society itself. Hasn't it occurred to you to wonder why I've been so indiscreet?"

"I suppose because you're going to admit me into the society," the waiter answered promptly.

Atherton's laugh had a disagreeable ring.

"Not at all," he said. "Better guess again, Max. I've told you so much because I know you will never be able to reveal what I've told you to any one else. In other words—I'm sorry to say it, because I'm really fond of you in a way—you'll never leave this apartment alive!"

As he spoke, he touched a bell, and in hardly more time than it takes to tell it, three stalwart menservants glided into the room.

"Fine specimens, aren't they?" queried Atherton. "I call them my bodyguard. As I've told you, they're all members of the order, and are sworn to obey my commands even at the cost of their own lives. Now, perhaps you see that you've made a little mistake in coming here so trustfully?"

But the waiter never turned a hair. He toyed with his revolver, glanced for a second at the street below, and then coolly studied the newcomers, making no attempt to rise from his chair.

"These melodramatic proceedings leave me cold," he said wearily. "I'm quite able to defend myself with this old friend here, and, what's more, if you or these fellows were to attempt to molest me, I should instantly smash this window and shout for help."

"I'm afraid that wouldn't be of much use to you," Atherton informed him. "You would be dead long before anybody arrived, and my men here would unanimously swear that you had attacked me, and that I had shot you in self-defense. You hadn't thought of that, I suppose?"

"I confess I hadn't," Max returned, unmoved. "Perhaps there's something, though, which you haven't thought of. My death wouldn't save you from exposure and ruin. I wasn't born yesterday, Mr. Alfred Knox Atherton. Before I came here, I wrote out and signed a full account of all that happened at Meadowview last night. I gave the paper to my wife, and I told her that if I hadn't returned by six o'clock she was to take the document to police headquarters."

Atherton bit his lip, and a spasm of baffled rage distorted his face.

"Your wife!" he snarled.

"The most charming woman in the world," the waiter assured him, in the silkiest of voices, but with a curious touch of sincerity. "You may perhaps have heard of her,

for she has an international reputation. Her name is Elaine Wilhelm, and she's sometimes called 'The Countess!'"

Atherton uttered a shout that was a curious blend of amazement and delight.

"Elaine Wilhelm—The Countess!" he cried. "You don't mean it! Then you—you are Johann Wilhelm?"

"The Count, at your service!" murmured the man, rising from his chair and bowing low.

CHAPTER X.

THE COUNT IS WELCOMED ROYALLY.

Atherton dismissed the servants with a peremptory wave of his hand.

"I shan't need you now," he said.

Then he turned to his visitor.

"Why on earth didn't you tell me this at first?" he demanded. "There was no need for you to try to gain admission to our society by threats. Surely, you might have known that you had only to mention your name to be welcomed with open arms.

"And your wife, too," he added. "In fact, if you won't be offended at my saying so, your wife will be almost more welcome than yourself. Only last week I was saying to Frost that I'd give five thousand dollars if I could lay my hands on Elaine Wilhelm. We know what you've both done and can do, how you defied the police again and again in a dozen cities, over here, and most of the capitals of Europe. We'll give you a royal welcome, both of you, but it just happens that your wife will come in particularly handy at the present time."

"She's a handy person at any time," remarked the Count, with a laugh, "and the police would give more than five thousand to get their hands on her. I don't suppose that you want her in the same sense that the police do."

"Hardly," returned Atherton. "We want the Countess because we have a scheme in view which can only be carried out by a woman of exceptional ability and courage. Unfortunately, we have no such woman in our society, and that's why I've been longing to get in touch with your remarkable side partner. She's the very one I want."

"May I ask what the scheme is?"

"Of course. Briefly, it's a plan for kidnaping old Enoch Pyle's grandson, and holding him for ransom."

"Who is Enoch Pyle?"

"You have heard of 'Pyle's Pink Pellets'?"

"Who hasn't?"

"Well, Enoch Pyle is the originator and proprietor. He's a millionaire two or three times over, but he's uncouth and uneducated. He and his wife, who is as impossible as himself, live at a place called Pyle's Park, which is a few miles on this side of Freehold. You passed the place on your motor cycle this morning."

"And who is his grandson?"

"The boy's name is Tommy Pyle. He's the son of Enoch's only boy, who died years ago. His mother is gone, too, and Mr. and Mrs. Pyle have taken him in, of course. Some day he'll inherit Pyle's pile, so to speak."

"How old is he?"

"About five. He's the apple of the old man's eye, and if we could kidnap him, I haven't a doubt that old Enoch would not hesitate to give a quarter of a million—or even a half—to get him back."

The Count nodded.

"It oughtn't to be a difficult matter to kidnap a child of five," he said.

"But it is in this case. Some gypsies tried it a couple of years ago, and ever since then old Pyle has been haunted by the fear of another attempt. The boy's bedroom is provided with steel-lined shutters and electric alarms. Whenever he goes outside the grounds—and most of the time in them, for that matter—he's accompanied by two burly guards armed with revolvers. In fact, he could not be more carefully guarded if he were a royal prince."

"Then how do you propose to get hold of him?"

"It was Jackson Frost who suggested the scheme. Now that I've told you what sort of people the Pyles are, you won't be surprised to hear that none of the best people call on them or invite them to their house. That's a very sore spot with Mr. and Mrs. Pyle, who long for social recognition. There's Mrs. Brook-White, for instance. She lives quite near to the Pyles, and is the acknowledged leader of society in that neighborhood. You've heard of her, in all probability? If she were to drop in at the Park some afternoon and take tea with them, their cup of joy would be filled to overflowing."

"But what has this to do with kidnaping old Pyle's grandson?"

"Everything. Frost's idea is this: He suggests that we select some capable woman who can look and act the part, disguise her as Mrs. Brook-White, and send her to the Park in a swagger motor car. The Pyles have only seen the lady at a distance, so they would be taken in. The supposed Mrs. Brook-White would chat with them, take tea with them, and ask to see the boy. In some clever way she would get him to ride with her as far as the Park gates. The old people would be delighted with such condescension; the boy would be lifted into the car, the car would dash off, the coveted Tommy would be smuggled aboard our yacht—and there you are!"

"Very neat," commented Wilhelm, whose surname had suggested his sobriquet of the Count. "I didn't think Frost had brains enough to concoct such a clever scheme, but why haven't you carried it out before?"

"Because, as I've already told you, we couldn't find a woman with the requisite daring and ability to impersonate the aristocratic Mrs. Brook-White. But your wife—— Ah, your wife! She's the very woman! Do you think she would be willing to play the part?"

"I'm sure she would," replied the German, without a moment's hesitation. "And she would play it to perfection."

Alfred Atherton glanced at his watch.

"There's no doubt about it," he said, with conviction. "I must be going now, though. I promised to lunch with Tufts at two. Frost and Kinsley will be there, and one or two others. Will you join us? I'll take you there in my car, which is outside, and I'll introduce you to your fellow members. We can then discuss the scheme in greater detail, and afterward, if you'll be so good, you might take me home with you and present me to your charming wife."

The Count approved of this suggestion, and a few minutes later he and Alfred Atherton were on their way to Professor Tuft's house.

CHAPTER XI.

AN ANGEL VISITS PYLE'S PARK.

A week had elapsed.

It was four o'clock in the afternoon, and in the drawing-room at Pyle's Park, Mr. and Mrs. Enoch Pyle were having tea.

The custom did not come naturally to them, but they believed it was the proper thing, and so they adopted it. It was particularly a trial to the old man, who, since his retirement, had been obliged to fight hard against an ingrained preference for shirt sleeves and slippers; but he had denied himself heroically, for the most part.

The merest glance about the room, with its costly furniture and costlier pictures and statuary, was enough to show that its owner was a man of great wealth; but one might have looked in vain for any signs of culture or good taste.

For Enoch Pyle and his wife, as Atherton has said, were old-fashioned country people, who had had few advantages.

Having said this, however, it is only fair to say that they had their good points—many of them. There was nothing mean or uncharitable about them. They were kind-hearted, hospitable, and generous to a fault.

At the same time, it must be admitted that they dearly loved "society"—at a distance—and that it was the greatest disappointment of their lives that none of the neighboring social lights would have anything to do with them.

At the moment the old couple were talking about the "sensational affair," as the newspapers called it, at Meadowview—the attempted burglary of the Massey jewels, and the wounding of Francis Massey's arm.

For unluckily—from the standpoint of The Order of the Philosopher's Stone—the rich haul had not been carried away. The jewel cases had not yet been placed in the waiting bag when the Count had fired, and that unlooked-for shot, coming from some mysterious quarter, had so unnerved the rascals for the time being that they had decamped without their booty.

Probably, also, they had feared with good reason, that the shot would alarm the household and bring the servants about their ears in short order.

At any rate, Johann Wilhelm had subsequently learned, to his deep disgust, that the burglary had been unsuccessful with all he had done.

"I heard down in the village to-day," said Mr. Pyle, "that the doctors ain't very encouragin'. They're afraid they'll have to ampytate Mr. Massey's hand. They say the bones——"

"I wish you wouldn't talk about bones at tea time!" protested his wife. "It don't seem proper, and it sort of takes my appetite away."

"Excuse me, ma," Mr. Pyle said humbly, and lapsed into silence.

"Ain't the police discovered any clew to the thieves yet?" his wife asked presently.

"Neither hide nor hair of one," was the answer. "An' that reminds me of somethin' else I heard in the village to-day. Mr. Massey has gone and sent for Nick Carter."

"That's what he'd ought to have done a week ago," declared his wife. "Has Mr. Carter been to the house yet?"

"He's there this afternoon. Him and one of his assistants—Chick, I think they call him. I'll bet it won't be long before they find a clew."

Mr. Pyle helped himself to another piece of buttered toast, then he coughed uneasily.

"Do you know, ma," he said, "I've been wonderin' if we oughtn't to call at Meadowview and leave a card—jest to show our sympathy, you know. What d'you think?"

"I don't know what to think," sighed Mrs. Pyle. "I was readin' a book on etiquette this mornin', and it said when any of our friends was sick, it was the correct thing to stop at the house and leave your card. But we couldn't honestly say that Mr. Massey was a friend of ours, could we? He's never taken no notice of us since we came here. In fact," she added bitterly, "none of 'em takes any notice of us. We could buy lots of 'em up and never miss the money, but——"

Suddenly she paused, and her eyes grew round and big with excitement. She was sitting near a window, and could see the drive which ran from the entrance gates to the front door of the house.

"Enoch," she said breathlessly, "there's a moty car comin' up the drive! Such a swell turnout, too. Who can it be?"

Mr. Pyle hurriedly set down his cup, tiptoed to the window, and cautiously peered out from behind the curtain. By that time the car had pulled up outside the front door, and an aristocratic-looking, fashionably dressed lady of middle age was in the act of stepping out.

"Marier," gasped Mr. Pyle, staggering back from the window, "as sure as you live, it's—it's Mrs. Brook-White comin' to call on us."

"And me in my second-best dress!" groaned Mrs. Pyle agitatedly. "Ain't that jest my luck! Put your tie straight, Enoch! Pull down your vest! And wipe that butter off your chin!"

In frantic haste the worthy couple strove to make themselves more presentable. A few moments of nerve-racking suspense followed, then the liveried footman flung open the door and announced:

"Mrs. Brook-White!"

Elaine—for it was she, of course—sailed into the room with an air that a queen might have envied. Her disguise was perfect, and her acting superb.

"My dear Mrs. Pyle!" she gushed, tripping forward and holding out her hand to that agitated woman, "I know what you must have been thinking of me for not having called upon you before. I've really wanted so much to, you know, ever since you came here, but you see, my time is so fully occupied—and this is your husband, is it? Charmed to make your acquaintance, Mr. Pyle! What a delightful place you have here. I hope now that I've made the plunge, that I shall be able to come often—if you'll let me."

"As often as you like, ma'am," said Mr. Pyle, who hardly knew whether he was standing on his head or his heels. "We'll be tickled to death to have you! But won't you sit down?"

"And won't you have a cup of tea?" asked Mrs. Pyle, when Elaine had seated herself.

The girl murmured her thanks, and the footman was dispatched in quest of another cup and a fresh supply of cakes and buttered toast. By the time these arrived, Elaine had completely won the hearts of her hosts, and had put them quite at their ease.

"By the way," she said presently, in her most dulcet tones, "you have a little nephew living with you, haven't you? Or is it a grandson?"

CHAPTER XII.

THE KIDNAPING.

"A grandson," replied Mr. Pyle. "Such a cute little feller, too! Only five, but as big as most boys of seven or eight. He's all we've got, you see, and some day all this will be his. Would you like to see him, Mrs. White?"

"Don't be foolish, Enoch!" protested his wife. "A lady like Mrs. White ain't interested in children."

"Indeed, I am!" declared Elaine. "I should dearly love to see the little man. Where is he?"

"In the nursery," said Mr. Pyle. "I'll bring him down."

The proprietor of Pyle's Pink Pellets left the room, and presently returned, leading Tommy by the hand—a curly-headed little chap wearing his first sailor's suit.

The boy was naturally shy at first, but he soon succumbed to Elaine's charming manners, and allowed her to take him on her knee.

How Mr. and Mrs. Pyle beamed! Here was their grandson sitting on the lap of a real social leader! Without a doubt, it was the proudest moment of their lives.

Presently Elaine announced that she must go.

"This has been a most delightful visit," she said, "but I'm afraid it must come to an end, as all good things do. You'll come and see me soon, though, won't you, and bring Tommy with you? I've quite set my heart on it."

She rose to her feet and held out her hand to the boy.

"Will you escort me to my car, Tommy?" she asked, with a dazzling smile.

The lad shyly took her hand, and they walked out of the room, Mr. and Mrs. Pyle following close behind them.

"This is a much nicer car than any of ours," Tommy announced, as Elaine took her seat, and the chauffeur solicitously tucked her in. "I wish we had a car like this, granddad."

"I'm sure you have much nicer ones as it is," the girl said, patting him on the head. "You just think this is better, because it is new to you. However, if you like it, would you care to ride with me as far as the gate?"

"Yes," Tommy said eagerly. "Can I go, granddad?"

Elaine turned to Mr. Pyle.

"Do you think you can trust me with him as far as the road?" she asked, throwing him a mischievous glance.

The glance struck home, and Mr. Pyle looked at her reproachfully.

"What a question!" he ejaculated. "Of course, I'd trust him with you anywhere. You—you can have anything we've got, Mrs. White."

"That's perfectly dear of you!" she said, holding out her hand to assist Tommy to climb into the car; then she turned to the driver. "Go slowly down the drive," she said, "so that Tommy's ride won't come to an end too soon, and stop at the gates."

The chauffeur—who was none other than the Count in disguise—touched his cap, and the car began to move slowly down the drive.

Mr. and Mrs. Pyle walked beside it, responding to Elaine's lively sallies in their slow, embarrassed way, and feeling several inches taller than they had felt an hour ago.

At last the car reached the gates and turned into the road. Wilhelm glanced ahead and saw that the way was clear, after which he looked back over his shoulder at Elaine, who replied, with an almost imperceptible nod.

Then suddenly the car leaped forward like a thing alive, and the next instant it was thundering along the road with the speed of an express train.

Mr. Pyle let out a cry of alarm, but no thought of treachery crossed his mind.

He merely thought the chauffeur had made a mistake, and had increased the speed of the machine instead of shutting off the power.

"Stop! stop!" he shouted, running after the car. "Shut off your engine and put on your brakes!"

Mrs. Pyle meanwhile stood still and wrung her hands. She was certain that the big car was running wild and that a terrible accident was imminent.

Then an extraordinary thing occurred.

The dignified Mrs. Brook-White—or, rather, the lady who Mr. and Mrs. Pyle believed to be Mrs. Brook-White—turned around in her seat with a mocking laugh, and daintily blew them a farewell kiss.

Mr. Pyle could hardly believe his eyes.

To use his own words, he was "completely flabbergasted." He pulled up with a gasp of incredulous bewilderment, and even as he did so, the car swung around a turn in the road and vanished from sight.

It was evident that Tommy Pyle was to have a much longer ride than either he or his grandparents anticipated, but where that ride would end, no one could say—except "Mrs. Brook-White," her eminently respectable-looking chauffeur, and certain of the leading members of The Order of the Philosopher's Stone.

CHAPTER XIII.

NICK COMES TO MEADOWVIEW.

It was quite true, as Mr. Pyle had heard, that Francis Massey had sent for Nick Carter.

He had first left the case in the hands of the local police, but when at the end of a week they had frankly confessed that they were baffled, he had wired for Nick Carter.

The detective promptly responded to the summons, and arrived at Meadowview in one of his private cars, accompanied by Chick and Captain, their police dog.

Massey received them in the study, his right hand swathed in bandages, and his left arm in a sling.

"If I had followed my own inclination," he said, "I should have sent for you at first. I was persuaded to place the matter in the hands of the police, but although they have been searching and investigating and inquiring and cross-examining for just a week, they're as far as ever from discovering any clew to the identity of the scoundrels. I sincerely trust you will be more successful."

The detective looked a little dubious.

"You haven't improved my chances by waiting a week before sending for me. However, I'll do my best, of course. Needless to say, I've read the newspaper accounts

of the case, but I should be glad to hear your version of the affair."

"If you've read the newspapers," replied Massey, "I don't suppose I can tell you anything that will be very new. We'd been to the opera—my wife and daughters and myself—and, in the ordinary course of events, we should have returned about half past twelve. Owing to engine troubles and a blow-out, however, it was just after two when we got here.

"We were all rather tired," he continued, "and we decided to go straight to bed. Before my wife and daughters retired, however, they handed me their jewels. I placed the latter in their proper cases, brought them to this room, and locked them in that safe."

He pointed to the mutilated safe in the corner. It was empty now, but was otherwise in the same condition as when the burglars had left it.

"After I'd locked up the jewels," Massey resumed, "I switched off the lights and went to bed. For some reason or other I could not get to sleep at once, and when I'd been in bed about half an hour I thought I heard somebody moving in the study. I got up quietly, put on a dressing gown and slippers, armed myself with a revolver, and stole downstairs.

"When I'd crept up to the door here," he went on, "I distinctly heard men at work in the room. I waited for a few seconds, and then I suddenly flung the door open and sprang in, switching on the lights as I did so. One glance showed me that the safe had been forced and the jewels removed. Two men were about to stow the cases in a leather bag, and two others were packing up the apparatus with which they had opened the safe."

"All the four men wore masks, I understand," Nick put in.

"That's true."

"So you never saw their faces?"

"Unfortunately I did not. From the cut of their clothes, however, and the appearance of their hands, I judged them to be men of a much superior type to the common housebreaker. Their hands were as white as my own, and their clothes were as good as those I'm wearing at this moment."

"That's interesting. Now, tell me what you did."

Massey described how he had covered the men with his revolver, and had ordered them to raise their hands and stand with their backs to the wall.

"They obeyed without a word," he said. "I thought I'd cowed them, and that I only had to ring for help in order to make my capture complete. But evidently they had posted a fifth man outside the window, to keep watch, and just as I was about to ring the bell—this bell on the desk—the scoundrel fired at me through the window and broke my wrist."

"Did you ever see the fifth man?"

"No, I should never have known of his existence had he not fired. It was very clever on their part to leave him out there."

"I see. What happened next?"

"Then for a moment the four masked men seemed almost as startled as myself—at least, so it appeared to me, although I had troubles of my own just then, and was hardly in a position to study them at my leisure. At any rate, panic seized them, I suppose, owing to the fear that the shot would be heard all over the house. The pain of my shattered wrist made it impossible for me to do anything more. I was helpless, and the jewels were at their mercy, but, to my amazement, they seemed to forget all about them."

"They bolted at once?"

Massey nodded.

"Yes," he answered. "They rushed to the window, tore down the curtain in their haste, and took to their heels through the grounds.

"The report of the revolver had aroused the household," he continued, "and, in a remarkably short time, the servants were scouring the grounds in all directions. Two of them saw a man in the act of mounting a motor cycle in the little lane at the back here. They tried to capture him, but he got away, and from that day to this nothing more has been seen or heard of any of the five of them."

"The man whom your servants saw in the lane—was he one of those in the study?"

"Apparently not. My people describe him as a young man of rather foreign appearance, wearing a dark-blue suit. There was no such man in this room. It seems clear to me that he was the one who was posted outside the window, and who fired at me."

"He escaped, you say, on a motor cycle? How did the others get away?"

"The police have a theory that they came here in a motor car, in which they afterward made their escape. It is only a theory, however. At least, there doesn't seem to be any proof. There was a heavy thunder shower an hour or two later, and that may have obliterated the marks of the car."

"They left the jewels behind, I understand."

"Yes, and they also left their apparatus and the leather bag in which they were about to pack the jewels when I disturbed them. Would you like to see the things?"

The continuation of this story will be found in the first issue of DETECTIVE STORY MAGAZINE, out October 5th. See the announcement on the next page, telling about this new magazine, which in future will contain, not only Nick Carter stories, but many other narratives dealing with the detective art.

It will be published twice a month, and the price will be ten cents a copy.

GETTING OUT OF A DIFFICULTY.

At a certain school, one day, the teacher had occasion to examine his class in arithmetic, previous to the final examination.

On finding that he had a very dilatory boy, and thinking to make him look a fool, he set him the under-mentioned task:

If a man was to fall down a well fifty feet deep, how long would it take him to get out if, for every foot he climbed, he fell down two?

The boy started figuring out the above sum.

After filling six slates with figures, the teacher stopped him, and asked what he was doing.

"Trying to get that man out of the well, sir," replied the boy.

"But that's not the way to do it."

"I don't know," said the boy. "Just you give me another half a dozen slates. I'll get that man out of the well if I have to take him right through to China."

Announcement Extraordinary

Readers of Nick Carter Stories, and lovers of narratives dealing with the detective art and the solving of mysterious crimes, there is a great treat coming to you. Nick Carter Stories has outgrown its present form and we are going to publish it in magazine style. It will be edited by Nicholas Carter, and will be called DETECTIVE STORY MAGAZINE. It will be published on the fifth and twentieth of each month, and will contain, besides a rattling good serial, telling of the exploits of Nick Carter, serials and short stories dealing with the detective art in all its forms. The stories will be the very best that can be obtained, and the magazine will contain one hundred and twenty-eight pages of them. The first number will be out October fifth. Don't miss it, and get your copy early, or you will get left, for they will sell fast.

SNAPSHOT ARTILLERY.

By BERTRAM LEBHAR.

(This interesting story was commenced in No. 153 of NICK CARTER STORIES. Back numbers can always be obtained from your news dealer or the publishers.)

CHAPTER XXXII.

THE OUTLAW NABBED.

Although Mayor Henkle had declared his intention of removing Chief of Police Hodgins from office as a result of the *Bulletin's* revelation of the police conditions which prevailed in Oldham, he had not done so.

There were several reasons why his honor had changed his mind about taking this step. In the first place, Hodgins was the mayor's wife's cousin, and his honor feared that Mrs. Henkle would have something to say if he fired her relative. Tyrant though he was at the city hall, the Honorable Martin Henkle stood in considerable awe of his little wife.

A second reason was that if he had removed Hodgins on account of those snapshots, the mayor, in order to be consistent, would have had to dismiss from the department the delinquent policemen whose pictures had appeared in the *Bulletin*. Some of these men had a strong political pull, and Mayor Henkle was disinclined to take such action against them.

Besides, the *Chronicle*, at the mayor's suggestion, had published a long editorial denouncing those police snapshots as atrocious fakes, and denying that the members of the force were really guilty of the misconduct of which the *Bulletin's* pictures had seemed to convict them. Consequently, the mayor could not have punished his chief of police without going back on the administration organ.

So Chief Hodgins still held on to his job. But he was not happy. The fact that Hawley had come back to Oldham, and was once more at work with his camera, was one of the things which prevented him from being so.

Goaded by the jeers and snarls of the mayor and by his own frantic desire for vengeance, he sought desperately to capture the Camera Chap; but, try as he would, he could not succeed in laying hands on that elusive man.

Hawley had become a veritable will-o'-the-wisp. Although every member of the force was as anxious as the chief to catch him, and kept a sharp lookout for him day and night, he seemed as immune from capture as a mosquito buzzing around the head of an armless man.

Hodgins stationed detectives outside the *Bulletin* office, in the hope of being able to apprehend him when he came to deliver the pictures; but, greatly to his chagrin, these sleuths reported that the Camera Chap did not come to the *Bulletin* office. Evidently anticipating this ambush, he had made secret arrangements with Carroll to get the films to the *Bulletin* without bringing them in person; but what this method was the police were unable to find out.

Hodgins also sent detectives, armed with a warrant, up to the mountain retreat of Hawley's host; but the latter informed the policemen that he had not seen the Camera Chap for several days. Evidently Hawley, anticipating this move, too, had seen fit to change his boarding house; and the police were unable to find his present residence.

Through the medium of the *Chronicle*, the chief of police appealed to all good citizens to aid in the capture of the "notorious camera bandit." Had this appeal met with a general response, the chances are that Hawley would soon have been caught; but, fortunately for him, the sympathies of the citizens of Oldham were largely on his side. The new anticamera law was not proving at all popular. People thought it a shame that the *Bulletin* should be discriminated against, and the public in general was rather pleased than otherwise by Hawley's success in dodging the police.

But at last Hawley's phenomenal luck deserted him. Chief Hodgins, strolling along Main Street one afternoon, saw a sight which astonished him so much that for a moment he was inclined to believe himself a victim of hallucinations.

There, only a few yards ahead of him, stood a man with a camera in his hand, photographing an ornamental fountain in which several urchins were paddling and splashing—a thing forbidden by law, but ignored by the indolent police.

It was the Camera Chap! His profile was turned toward the chief, and the latter recognized him at first glance.

With a gasp of joy, Hodgins bounded forward. Hawley was so intent upon getting a focus that he did not perceive his danger until a heavy hand clutched him roughly by the coat collar and a hoarse voice exclaimed:

"Got you at last! Try to get away, and I'll let daylight into you!"

Hodgins had drawn his revolver as he rushed toward the Camera Chap, and he pressed the barrel of the weapon against his prisoner's ribs. It was not usual for him to indulge in such spectacular gun play when making an arrest for a misdemeanor, but he had the legal right to shoot if his prisoner attempted to escape, and so bitter was he against Hawley that he would not have hesitated to avail himself of that right if the latter had made it necessary.

But the Camera Chap proved to be a most submissive prisoner. Although he knew that he was booked now for a six months' stay in the county jail, he accepted the situation with a rueful smile. The prospect was decidedly unpleasant, but there was nothing to be gained by "going up in the air."

Hodgins slipped handcuffs on his wrists, and marched him to police headquarters. Thrusting him into a cell and bidding the turnkey keep a vigilant watch over him, the chief hurried to the city hall to tell the mayor the good news.

Half an hour later, as the Camera Chap sat in his cell, pondering on how he was going to get out of this predicament, there came to his ears the sound of a violent detonation, as though somebody had exploded a dynamite bomb in the vicinity of the headquarters building.

Hawley wondered greatly as to the meaning of this. As the hours went by, he wondered, too, why he was not taken before a magistrate, instead of being kept at police headquarters. He put both of these questions to the turnkey, but could get no answer from that taciturn official.

At length, however, his curiosity was satisfied in a most startling manner. The door of his cell was suddenly opened, and a powerfully built man, struggling desperately in the grip of two burly policemen, was dragged into the cage.

As the iron gate closed with a clang, Hawley turned to this new captive in great astonishment.

"Ye gods, Fred!" he exclaimed. "Have they got you, too? What on earth for?"

Carroll, bleeding from a deep gash on his left temple, and badly bruised about the face, laughed bitterly.

"There's been a tragedy," he said. "The Chronicle Building has been blown up by dynamite, and old man Gale killed—or, at least, fatally injured. And that fathead, Hodgins, accuses me of being responsible for the outrage."

CHAPTER XXXIII.

A BOMB OUTRAGE.

Chief of Police Hodgins had been to the city hall to tell the mayor the good news that the Camera Chap had been captured, and was on his way back to police headquarters when the explosion in the Chronicle Building occurred.

As he passed the office of Gale's newspaper, the chief thought that he might as well drop in and tell his old friend the glad tidings, too. He knew that the proprietor of the *Chronicle* and his son would be delighted to hear that Hawley's wings had been clipped at last, and that Mayor Henkle had agreed that the "young desperado" must be sent to jail, public sentiment to the contrary notwithstanding.

Hodgins was just about to enter the building when there came a violent report, followed instantly by a crash and loud cries of alarm.

"Great grief!" he gasped. "What has happened? Sounds as if a bomb had gone off. And it came from inside the building, too!"

Rushing up the stairs, which were strewn with pieces of plaster that the explosion had torn from the walls, the chief entered the private office of Delancey Gale—or, to be more exact, all that was left of the private office.

The room was a total wreck. Its door had been torn from its hinges; the panes of the two windows were completely blown out; the ceiling had come down; great holes had been torn in the plastering of the walls; the office furniture was smashed.

And, stretched on the floor, lying so still that Hodgins thought at first that he surely must be dead, was old Delancey Gale, so badly banged up by the explosion that his face was scarcely recognizable.

In the hope that there might still be some life left in that inert form, the chief of police grabbed the telephone which stood on the ruin of what had been a fine mahogany desk. Fortunately the instrument was still in working order, and in a few minutes he had the hospital on the wire, and was imploring them to send an ambulance to the *Chronicle* office with as little delay as possible.

When the ambulance surgeon arrived, he announced that there was still a spark of life left in the proprietor of the *Chronicle*, but that it was exceedingly doubtful whether he would survive his injuries.

"Anybody else hurt, chief?" the surgeon inquired, as he and his driver placed the wounded man on a stretcher and prepared to take him to the hospital.

"It seems not," Hodgins replied. "A couple of chaps in the reporters' room got a few scratches, I'm told; but nobody except poor Gale is injured seriously. The whole building was jarred by the explosion, but most of its force seems to have been confined to this room."

"How did it happen?" the surgeon inquired, as he lifted one end of the stretcher and started to carry the unconscious man to the ambulance.

"Looks to me like a bomb outrage," the police official replied, with a scowl. "See that clockwork affair over there on the floor? I reckon it was that contraption which caused the damage. But I ain't had time to make an investigation. I've got my suspicions, though, as to who is responsible for this atrocity."

Just as they were lifting the stretcher into the ambulance, young Gale pushed his way through the crowd which had gathered on the sidewalk. He had gone out on an errand for his father about an hour before the explosion, and the sight of the ambulance and the crowd gathered in front of the *Chronicle* office was the first intimation he had that anything was wrong. His face was white as he approached Chief Hodgins.

"Is the governor dead?" he inquired hoarsely.

"Not quite," was the gruff reply. "But the doc says he don't stand much show. What do you know about this explosion, my boy?"

"Nothing at all," Gale replied nervously. "I can't understand how it happened."

"I reckon I've got a pretty clear idea how it happened, all right," growled Hodgins. "Somebody sent the old gent an infernal machine. The pieces of it are lying on the floor of the office now. And it ain't hard to guess who that somebody was, eh?"

"No, indeed," young Gale replied. "My father has only one enemy—at least, only one who would be capable of such a cowardly attack. That cad, Carroll, is responsible for this, as sure as you're standing here, chief! I demand that you place him under arrest at once!"

"You won't have to ask that of me twice," Hodgins replied grimly. "My fingers are just itching to get hold of that big stiff's coat collar. But first let us go in and look the ground over, and see if we can't find a little more evidence against him. Suspicion ain't evidence, you know."

A more affectionate son might have preferred to accompany the ambulance to the hospital, in order to be present, or near at hand, while the surgeons made a thorough examination of his father's injuries; but this course did not seem to suggest itself to Gale.

Eagerly he followed the chief of police up the plaster-strewn stairway to the wrecked private office of the proprietor of the *Chronicle*.

They examined the fragments of the exploded infernal machine, and found there some clews which caused Gale to turn excitedly to Hodgins.

"It's Carroll, sure enough!" he cried triumphantly. "We've got enough evidence here to send him to the chair, if the governor dies, and to prison for life if he doesn't. Come on, chief; let's march to the *Bulletin* office and place him under arrest."

The chief of police took the precaution of providing himself with an escort of four stalwart members of his force before he went to arrest the proprietor of the *Bulletin*.

Not possessing the sunny, placid disposition of his friend Hawley, Carroll's indignation took the form of physical resistance when he learned the intentions of his visitors concerning himself. Hodgins and his posse had

to send for reënforcements before they could get him out of the building.

That was why the proprietor of the *Bulletin* presented such a battered appearance when he joined the Camera Chap in the cell at police headquarters.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

DUBIOUS PROSPECTS.

"The *Chronicle* office blown up!" exclaimed Hawley, staring at his cellmate in horrified astonishment. "Who could have done it, Fred?"

"I don't know who did it," the proprietor of the *Bulletin* answered, with a scowl, applying his handkerchief to the deep cut in his scalp which Chief Hodgins had inflicted with the butt of his revolver. "I only know that I didn't have anything to do with the outrage."

"Of course you didn't, old man," said the Camera Chap soothingly. "I know you too well to believe you capable of anything like that. What grounds have they for trying to put it up to you?"

Carroll laughed grimly. "Oh, they claim to have plenty of evidence—enough to send me to the chair, if old Gale dies. Hodgins told me that the box in which the infernal machine was inclosed has been identified as a box which was previously in my possession. He claims, too, that they have the wrapper of the package, and that the address is in my handwriting. If they can prove these things, they've got a strong case against me."

"*If* they can prove them!" exclaimed Hawley, with a confident laugh. "But of course there's no danger of that. The whole thing is a palpable frame-up."

"There's no doubt about it's being a frame-up," said Carroll; "but I'm not so sure that it's palpable. Hodgins is an expert at manufacturing evidence, and if he's careful not to make any breaks, he'll probably be able to convince a jury that he's got the goods on me. You see, Frank, there's the question of motive to be considered. I'm afraid they've got me there."

"Motive?" the Camera Chap repeated, with an interrogative inflection.

"Certainly. Everybody in Oldham is aware of the enmity which existed between myself and the Gales. Isn't it only natural that I should be the first person suspected of sending that infernal machine?"

"Not at all," Hawley protested indignantly. "You are illogical at your own expense, Fred. Even assuming that you could be coward enough to have done such a thing—which, of course, is quite out of the question, old man—what logical reason could you have had for resorting to such desperate tactics? You were winning. Everything was going your way. You had no cause to use violence."

Carroll brightened up a trifle at this argument. "I suppose there's something in that," he agreed, once more dabbing with his handkerchief at the gash on his temple.

"By the way, old man," said Hawley, noticing this act; "you haven't told me yet how you came by that cut and battered countenance. You weren't in the Chronicle Building when the explosion took place, were you?"

"Not exactly," Carroll answered, with a sheepish grin. "I received these wounds in the Bulletin Building. When Hodgins and his men came and told me that they wanted me for sending that bomb, I—well, I'm afraid I lost my temper for a little while."

Hawley shook his head disapprovingly. "That was foolish of you, old man. I gave you credit for possessing more poise. What will the citizens of Oldham say when they learn that the man who is to be their next mayor was so lawless as to resist arrest?"

Carroll laughed bitterly. "Don't deceive yourself about any strong chance of my being Oldham's next mayor. That's out of the question now. Even if I'm fortunate enough to be able to clear myself of this charge in court, I'll have a hard job convincing the public that I didn't send that bomb to the *Chronicle* office. You ought to have seen how the crowds on the streets acted when I was being brought here. Their attitude was so ugly that I was afraid they were going to take me away from the police and string me to a lamp-post. The people of this town are always willing to believe the worst of a man. You never saw such a community of backbiters. I guess this arrest means the finish of my political aspirations."

"Nonsense!" Hawley returned reassuringly. "Don't worry about that, Fred. The public may be inclined to suspect you at first, but we'll soon swing them around to our side again. We're going to put you in the mayor's chair, old man, in spite of this little trouble."

"We?" exclaimed Carroll pointedly. "Good heavens, man, you don't seem to realize your own position at all!" He laid his hand sympathetically upon his friend's shoulder. "Poor old chap! There's precious little you'll be able to do between now and election. Even if I do manage to get out of this mess, your goose is cooked for sure. There isn't any doubt that they'll send you to jail for six months for taking pictures without a license. They've got a clear case against you, and I can't see how you're going to get out of it."

The Camera Chap smiled. "Yes, I must admit that it does look very much as if I'm slated to spend the next six months in practicing the gentle art of converting large stones into little ones. You are wrong in supposing that I don't realize the position I'm in, Fred."

"Then how the deuce can you be so cheerful?" Carroll demanded. "By jinks, Frank, you're the most unselfish fellow I've ever met! Here you are worrying about me, and trying to cheer me up, when you have plenty of cause to be brooding over your own impending fate."

Hawley shrugged his shoulders. "What's the use of brooding? I've never seen anybody get any farther by doing that. Besides, I'm not absolutely positive that I'm going to jail. I've still got a faint ray of hope."

"What is it?" Carroll inquired eagerly.

"The New York *Sentinel*," the Camera Chap replied. "If I can get word to Tom Paxton, I haven't any doubt he'll come to my rescue with bells on. The good old *Sentinel* stands by its men through thick and thin, and, although I don't quite see how he's going to work it, I am hopeful that Tom Paxton will find some way of saving me from jail.

"The trouble is, though," he added, "how the deuce am I going to get word to him? Hodgins isn't going to let me get in touch with my friends, if he can help it."

"But he wouldn't dare do that," Carroll protested indignantly. "It is illegal. It is your constitutional right to confer——"

"Pshaw! A little thing like a prisoner's constitutional rights doesn't bother our friend Hodgins," the Camera Chap interrupted. "Besides, it is a condition and not a theory which confronts us. I asked the turnkey to let me

send a telegram from here, and was curtly refused. The man told me that he had orders not to let me communicate with any one. They wouldn't even let me send word of my arrest to you. Still, I am confident that I'll be able to find some way of getting a C. Q. D. call to the *Sentinel*."

"You don't have to worry about that," Carroll assured him. "Word has already been sent to the *Sentinel*. I guess by this time, Frank, Paxton is aware of your predicament."

"Why, what do you mean?" Hawley demanded eagerly.

"I mean that as soon as I heard of your arrest, old man, I took the liberty of wiring to Paxton, advising him of the situation," Carroll explained.

"And you took that step without waiting to consult with me?" It seemed to Carroll that there was a trace of resentment in the Camera Chap's tone.

"Yes; I remembered how you used to hate to appeal to the paper when you were in difficulties in the days when I was on the *Sentinel* staff. I was afraid that you wouldn't hear of letting Paxton know of your plight, so I decided to go ahead on my own hook. Hope you're not mad with me for doing so, old man?"

"Mad with you? I should say not, indeed," Hawley replied, with a joyous laugh. "I am mighty glad that you sent that telegram, Fred. Generally, as you say, I don't like to bother the paper when I'm in trouble; but this is one of the times when I can't get along without the *Sentinel's* help."

CHAPTER XXXV.

A C. Q. D. CALL.

Only a few days previous, Tom Paxton, managing editor of the New York *Sentinel*, had received a letter from the Camera Chap. It ran as follows:

"My Dear Tom: I am having a great time out here in the beautiful Catskills. The peace and quiet of this picturesque mountain retreat are just the things for my jaded nerves. I have not forgotten my physician's instructions to avoid all forms of excitement, nor your kind advice to try to forget that there is such a thing in the world as a camera. I like this calm, inactive life so much that if you can possibly spare me, I should like to stay out here a few weeks longer than I had contemplated. Hope this will be satisfactory, as I should really hate to leave here just now."

Now, Paxton knew the Camera Chap too well to be entirely deceived by this ingeniously worded missive. He knew that peace, inactivity, and picturesque scenery were not sufficiently alluring to Hawley to cause him to wish to prolong his absence from Park Row. He had strong doubts, too, whether it was within the bounds of possibility for Hawley to go for so long a time without using a camera.

He read the letter over again, and chuckled. "He says that he has not forgotten his physician's instructions to avoid all forms of excitement, or my advice to try to forget that there is such a thing in the world as a camera," he mused. "He says he has not forgotten that advice, but he does not say that he has followed it.

"I wonder what mischief the young dare-devil is up to?" he went on. "There must be something pretty good going on up there to make him ask for a longer vacation. He wasn't at all keen on going away."

Then Paxton took his pen, and answered Hawley's letter:

"My Dear Frank: By all means, take as long as you like. Things are pretty slow in town, and your presence here is not needed. But even if we did need you, I should hesitate to take you away from the 'peace and quiet of the picturesque Catskills,' since you appear to be deriving so much enjoyment and benefit from them."

It happened that the letter was never mailed. Paxton had inclosed it in an envelope, and was about to address it, when some important business matter claimed his attention. The missive was thrust into a pigeonhole of the managing editor's desk, and it was not until several days later that Paxton came across it, and reproached himself for his carelessness.

He was just putting a stamp on it, with the intention of sending it out to the mail chute, when an office boy entered the private office, and handed him a telegram:

"Paxton, Managing Editor, New York *Sentinel*.

"Frank Hawley, *Sentinel* staff photographer, arrested here to-day. He is in a bad fix, and will surely go to jail for six months unless you can save him. Send help at once. Oldham Daily Bulletin."

Paxton was a man of quick action. Without wasting any time trying to read between the lines of this laconic message, he grabbed the receiver from the telephone on his desk, and gave an order to the switchboard operator.

"Get the Oldham *Bulletin* on the long-distance wire immediately," he commanded, "and let me talk to the managing editor."

Fred Carroll had been arrested and taken to police headquarters before this telephonic connection was made, but one of the *Bulletin's* staff spoke to Paxton over the wire, and gave him the details of the Camera Chap's predicament.

Then the managing editor of the *Sentinel* did some more telephoning.

"Call up Powers & Hands' law office, and ask Mr. Hands to be kind enough to step over here and see me as soon as possible," he said to the switchboard operator. "Tell him to be prepared to take a little trip out of town right away."

Powers & Hands was the firm which attended to all the *Sentinel's* legal business. They were one of the most prominent law firms in New York, and saved the *Sentinel* thousands of dollars annually by squelching incipient libel suits brought against that newspaper, or successfully fighting in the courts those which could not be squelched.

Mr. Horatio Hands, the younger of the partners, was not much to look at. He was an insignificant little chap, with a red beard and a thin voice that was almost falsetto. He was not much of a success at addressing a jury—his partner, big Alexander Powers, attended to that part of the work—but when it came to getting a client off on a legal technicality, or winning a case by picking flaws in a law, there wasn't another lawyer in New York who was his equal. That was why Tom Paxton had chosen him to go to the rescue of the Camera Chap, instead of calling for the services of his more oratorical but less keen-witted partner.

Mr. Hands came over to the *Sentinel* office right away. "Well, Mr. Paxton?" he squeaked, as he entered the managing editor's sanctum. "What unfortunate citizen has the *Sentinel* been traducing this time?"

"It isn't a libel suit, Mr. Hands," Paxton explained, with a smile. "It's one of the young men of our staff. He's got into a little trouble in Oldham—a small town in the vicinity of the Catskills. I have just received word of his plight, and would appreciate it very much if you would go out there right away and help him out of this scrape."

The lawyer frowned. "Only a reporter in a scrape, eh? Couldn't one of our clerks attend to that just as well? Surely it isn't necessary for me to go out there personally."

"Yes, it is," Paxton declared. "I understand that he's in a pretty bad fix, and it's require the best of legal talent to get him out. That is why I have sent for you, Mr. Hands."

The lawyer bowed in acknowledgment of this compliment, but his frown deepened.

"Well, I'm very busy just now," he said, "and I shall have to charge you a good fee if it is necessary to give my own time to this case."

"I don't care what it costs!" Paxton rejoined vehemently. "When the Camera Chap is in danger of going to jail, the *Sentinel* doesn't consider the question of expense. You've got to get him out, Mr. Hands, even if you have to take his case all the way up to the United States supreme court.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

A TYPOGRAPHICAL ERROR.

When Chief of Police Hodgins learned that a prominent lawyer had come from New York to take the case of the Camera Chap, he was somewhat worried; but when he got a glimpse of Mr. Horatio Hands, his anxiety vanished, and he expressed his opinion of that legal luminary by a guffaw of derision.

"You just oughter to see him, Mr. Mayor," he said to the Honorable Martin Henkle. "He's a little bit of a pink-whispered runt that don't look as if he's got nerve enough to swat a fly. I guess we ain't got nothin' to fear from him."

"Well, you can't always go by appearances," Mayor Henkle replied. "He must be a pretty good lawyer, or that newspaper wouldn't have sent him here. However, we have no cause to worry that I can see. We've got a clear cut-and-dried case against that fellow Hawley, and all the lawyers in the world couldn't keep him out of jail."

Hodgins nodded. "Sure! He might as well plead guilty, and save the court's time. What defense can he offer? None that I can think of. By the way, Mr. Mayor, I met my friend Timmins, the warden of the county jail, on Main Street this morning. I spoke to him about that Camera Chap, and Timmins has promised to make things hot for him when he arrives there. Timmins has his own little ways of rubbing it into an inmate of his institution when he don't like him. I guess by the time that young loafer gets through servin' his time he'll have had all the chestiness taken out of him."

Although Hawley, according to his legal rights, should have been brought before a magistrate on the same day that he was arrested, he was not taken to court until the following morning.

The delay was due to the explosion in the Chronicle Building. Hodgins had been so busy working on that case that he had not had time to go to court, eager though he was to see the Camera Chap's case disposed of as soon as possible.

The latter, with Carroll to keep him company, spent the night in the cell at police headquarters. The next morning both of them were taken to the police court, but while Hawley, his offense being only a misdemeanor, was to have his fate settled right away in that court, Carroll, being charged with a more serious crime, was to have merely a preliminary examination.

The explosion in the Chronicle Building had created a lot of excitement in Oldham, and the courtroom was crowded when the two newspaper men were arraigned. The Honorable Martin Henkle was among those present. He sat on the bench beside the magistrate, a smile of grim satisfaction upon his face.

Carroll was the first to be given a hearing. As he was arraigned at the bench, a little man with a reddish beard stepped briskly to his side.

"Who are you, sir?" the judge inquired.

"Counsel for the defense, your honor," the little man answered, in a shrill, piping voice that caused many in the courtroom to smile.

Chief Hodgins scowled. "But I thought you was the lawyer for the other one—the camera feller," he protested.

"I am not responsible for your thoughts, my friend," the lawyer retorted. "If I were, my responsibilities would be light. However, in order to satisfy your curiosity, I don't mind informing you that I have been retained as counsel in both cases. Mr. Carroll has honored me by asking me to look after his interests, too."

The lawyer turned to the magistrate. "Your honor, in this case, although I am convinced that my client's arrest is an outrage, as we shall easily prove later on, we will waive examination."

"Very good, sir," said the judge. "I will remand the prisoner to the county jail, to await the action of the grand jury. Call the next case."

"Frank Hawley to the bar!" yelled the court officer.

As the Camera Chap stepped forward, his eyes met those of the Honorable Martin Henkle. The latter's face wore an expression resembling that of a cat which is about to swallow a canary. It was an exact duplicate of the expression which at that moment adorned the countenance of Chief of Police Hodgins.

It did not take the latter long to present his evidence against the prisoner. Three recent victims of Hawley's camera came forward, and identified him as the man who had snapshotted them on the streets of Oldham. Hodgins swore that these pictures had been taken without a license.

Copies of the *Bulletin* containing reproductions of these snapshots were offered in evidence. Counsel for the defense asked to be permitted to examine these exhibits. After he had glanced at them, the lawyer addressed the court.

"Your honor," he cried shrilly, "admitting that my client took those snapshots without a license, I move that the case be dismissed on the grounds that he has violated no law."

The magistrate stared at him in astonishment. Mayor Henkle, rendered vaguely uneasy by the lawyer's confident tone, fidgeted nervously in his seat. Chief Hodgins uttered a loud snort of contempt; never in all his experience had he heard such bosh.

"On the grounds that he has violated no law?" the magistrate repeated witheringly. "I don't understand you, sir. It appears to the court that the prisoner has violated the law prohibiting the taking of photographs on the streets of Oldham without a license."

"There is no such law, your honor," squeaked the little attorney.

"What!" cried the magistrate fiercely. "You had better be careful, sir. If you attempt to trifle with the dignity of this court you will quickly find yourself committed for contempt. I don't care if you come from New York or——"

"There is no such law," the counsel for the defense repeated, his voice even more shrill than before. "If your honor will inspect the original copy of the ordinance requiring the licensing of cameras, you will realize the truth of my assertion."

The judge frowned. "I think you had better explain, sir," he said sharply. "Your statements are most extraordinary. They almost warrant a suspicion either that you are mentally unbalanced or that you have been imbibing too freely. With one breath you say there is no camera law, and with the next you ask me to inspect the original copy of the camera law. How can I inspect it if there isn't any?"

"I beg your pardon," said the lawyer, with a smile. "I did not say that there was no camera law. My contention is merely that there is no law which forbids the taking of photographs on the street of Oldham without a license."

"Oh, indeed?" the magistrate sneered. "Then what does the law forbid—as you understand it?"

"It forbids the taking of photographs of the streets of Oldham," the lawyer replied. "It's wording is very clear."

"Nonsense!" cried his honor peevishly. "It says on the streets, not of the streets. Somebody has been misleading you."

"Not at all, your honor. I have seen the original copy of the ordinance myself. I had occasion to examine it less than an hour ago, and I was very particular to notice its exact wording. If your honor will take the trouble to inspect the original draft of the ordinance—the one which was signed by the mayor—you will find that I am right."

"If such is the case," Mayor Henkle broke in, with a scowl, "it is merely a typographical error. Everybody knows that it was the intention of the framers of the ordinance to regulate the taking of photographs on the streets of Oldham."

"I am willing to concede that, sir," counsel for the defense replied smilingly. "But, fortunately for my client, intentions don't count. The use of the word of, instead of on, may be a typographical error, but the law must be interpreted precisely as it reads. It isn't by any means the first time that a typographical error has saved a man from jail. I have known cases where even a misplaced comma has had that result."

Then he turned once more to the magistrate. "I repeat my motion, your honor, that this case be dismissed. Since none of these snapshots which my client is accused of taking—and which he admits having taken—is a photograph of the streets of Oldham, he is guilty of no violation of the law."

The magistrate frowned. "We will adjourn court while we go and inspect the original draft of the ordinance," he announced. Then, turning to the Honorable Martin Henkle, he whispered to that discomfited official's ear: "If this typographical error really does exist, Mr. Mayor, I am afraid that we will have to throw the case out of court. As this lawyer has said, the accused is entitled to a strict interpretation of the law. If I decided otherwise, they would go to a higher court."

Once more the Camera Chape's phenomenal luck, which never seemed to desert him when he was in tight places, had come to his rescue. The carelessness of a typist in striking the letter "f" instead of the letter "n," and the fact that the mayor had put his signature and seal to the document without noticing the error, enabled him to leave court, half an hour later, a free man.

But Hawley did not give all the credit to his lucky star. When the magistrate, returning from the vaults in which the original drafts of Oldham's ordinances were preserved, very ungraciously granted Lawyer Hands' motion that the case be dismissed, the Camera Chap turned to his counsel with a grateful smile.

"I owe my liberty to you, sir," he exclaimed. "I shan't forget it in a hurry. How on earth did you happen to guess that you would find that mistake in the wording of the law?"

"Oh, I always make it a rule in cases of this sort to examine carefully the original draft of the law, in the hope of finding some point on which to base a legal technicality," the lawyer replied. "I had no idea, though, that I should find such a glaring typographical error as that. You certainly are a very fortunate young man."

"I surely am," the Camera Chap agreed heartily. "I only hope that my friend Carroll will be equally as fortunate."

CHAPTER XXXVII.

THE MAIN RESOURCE.

Although the Camera Chap had so provokingly slipped through their hands, Mayor Henkle, Chief Hodgins, and young Gale were confident that no legal technicality could save his friend Carroll.

True, he was no longer in danger of going to the electric chair. The surgeons at the hospital, who at first believed that old Delancey Gale was fatally injured, had a little later revised that opinion, and announced that, barring unforeseen complications, he would pull through all right. But Carroll's enemies were not greatly disappointed at the thought of his escaping capital punishment. A sentence of life imprisonment for the proprietor of the *Bulletin* would be quite satisfactory to them.

That they had enough evidence to convict him of "assault with intent to kill" they felt sure. Chief Hodgins, with the assistance of his young friend Gale, had built up a strong case against Carroll.

In the first place, there was the box in which the infernal machine had been inclosed. The explosion had smashed this box, but the pieces were all there, and they had managed to put them together again.

It was a small, oblong wooden box, and undoubtedly it had come from the *Bulletin* office. This could be proved by the marks stenciled on the lid.

Carroll had been in the habit of receiving each day from a New York syndicate two half-tone cuts of woman's fashions for publication in the *Bulletin*. These cuts were shipped in small, oblong wooden boxes. It was one of these boxes which had been used for the infernal machine.

But the strongest proof of all that Carroll had sent the explosive package to the *Chronicle* office was the fact that the package was addressed in his own handwriting.

Chief Hodgins had on file at police headquarters a personal letter which the proprietor of the *Bulletin* had once sent to him. He had taken this letter from the file, and compared it with the handwriting on the wrapper of the infernal machine. Although he was not a handwriting expert, he was willing to wager every dollar he had in the world that both had been penned by the same hand.

So confident was he that Carroll could not succeed in breaking down the case against him that when young Gale asked to be allowed to photograph the wrapper of the infernal machine and reproduce it on the front page of the *Chronicle*, the chief consented.

"Generally speaking, it's a bad thing to let the other side get a glimpse at your evidence the day of the trial," he said; "but I can't see that it's going to do any harm in this case. Even that pink-whiskered lawyer fellow from New York won't be able to make a jury believe that the address wasn't written by Carroll. So go ahead, my boy, and publish it, if you want to."

When the Camera Chap and Lawyer Hands saw this exhibit on the front page of the *Chronicle*, they were greatly interested.

"It certainly does look like Fred's handwriting," Hawley declared. "But it must be a clever forgery."

The lawyer shook his head. "I'm not so sure that it is a forgery at all," he said quietly. "I shouldn't be surprised if it were really Carroll's own handwriting."

Hawley stared at him in astonishment. "But I don't understand. How could it have been written by him if he didn't send the bomb—and I am quite sure that he didn't."

"So am I," the lawyer answered, with a smile. "But let me read you a paragraph from to-day's *Chronicle*. Then I think a solution of the mystery will suggest itself to you."

Hawley listened intently while Mr. Hands read aloud this extract from the article which young Gale had written for the front page of his father's newspaper:

"'The cut published on this page is a photographic reproduction of the wrapper in which the deadly infernal machine was inclosed. The mechanism was packed in a small wooden box. This box was wrapped in stout blue paper, one which was pasted a small label of white paper. On this label the words, "Delancey Gale, Esquire, Chronicle Building, Personal," was written in ink. That this address is the handwriting of Frederick Carroll, proprietor of the Oldham's *Bulletin*, there cannot be the shadow of a doubt.'"

The Camera Chap's face lighted up. "A label of white paper, eh?" he exclaimed, with a grin. "About the size of an ordinary correspondence envelope, I suppose?"

The lawyer nodded. "I see that you get the idea. At some time or other Carroll must have had occasion to send a personal letter to Gale. They happened to save the envelope of that letter, and they used the front part of it as the label for the infernal machine."

"That's a very likely theory," the Camera Chap agreed. "Quite an ingenious idea on their part, wasn't it? But do you really think that old Gale fixed up that bomb himself?"

"Certainly. Don't you? The whole thing is perfectly clear to me. They wanted to discredit Carroll in the eyes of the public, to make it impossible for him to win at the coming election, so they planned this bomb outrage. I think 'planted' is the word you newspaper men use, is it not?"

"But is it logical to suppose that old Gale would go to the length of deliberately blowing himself up?" the Camera Chap exclaimed.

"It is not," the lawyer answered, with a smile. "And I don't suppose anything of the kind. I feel perfectly sure that Gale had no intention of having that bomb explode in his hands."

"Then how do you suppose it happened?"

"It was an accident, of course. My theory is that the Gales didn't intend to have the bomb explode at all. They planned merely to have it 'discovered' in the Chronicle Building, timed to go off at a certain hour. They were going to send for Chief Hodgins, and have him remove the package to police headquarters. If the plan had gone through all right, Hodgins would have taken the package to headquarters, soaked it in a pail of water, and then examined its contents. He would have announced that it was a genuine, sure-enough infernal machine of the most deadly type. Within a few hours everybody in Oldham would have heard of the dastardly attempt to blow up the Chronicle Building."

"And that Fred Carroll was responsible for it," the Camera Chap added, with a grim smile.

"Well, I don't know about that," the lawyer answered. "I don't think that they would have sprung that sensation right away. If they had a proper sense of the dramatic, they would have allowed the identity of the sender of the infernal machine to remain a mystery for several days. Then, when the people of Oldham were keyed up to a proper pitch of excitement, Hodgins would suddenly have announced that the infernal machine had been sent by Carroll, and would have produced his evidence to prove his startling charge."

"You certainly possess a vivid imagination, Mr. Hands," the Camera Chap declared. "I have no doubt, though, that that is just about what they intended to do, if the bomb hadn't gone off accidentally while old Gale was handling it in his private office, and made the thing much more serious than they contemplated."

"I am confident that my theory is correct," said the lawyer; "but the trouble is, we are going to have a hard job proving it. In order to do so, we shall have to show that Gale made the infernal machine himself. I am afraid that is going to be a poser."

"I've got an idea, Mr. Hands," said Hawley. "I think if I were to go out and take a snapshot of young Gale it might help us a lot."

"How?" the lawyer queried, with a bewildered frown. "A snapshot of young Gale? I must confess that I can't perceive what good that'll do."

But when Hawley had explained what he intended to do with the picture when he got it, Mr. Hands smiled upon him approvingly.

"An excellent plan!" he cried enthusiasticaly. "Go ahead and carry it out. I congratulate you upon your bright

idea. If it succeeds, it will surely get your friend Carroll out of his predicament; and I have strong hopes that it will succeed."

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

A CLEVER SCHEME.

The younger Gale was greatly astonished when, as he was walking along Main Street, Hawley suddenly appeared a few yards in front of him with a camera in his hand, and coolly proceeded to take his picture.

Gale's first impulse was to summon a policeman and have the Camera Chap placed under arrest; but he suddenly recollected that, as the city council had not yet passed an amended anticamera law, Hawley had a perfect right under the existing ordinance, with its typographical error, to take snapshots on the streets of Oldham without a license, provided he did not take pictures of the streets. Therefore, Gale gave up the idea of having Hawley arrested.

His next impulse was to rush forward, grab the camera out of Hawley's hands, and crunch it beneath his foot. But he did not carry out this impulse, either. The Camera Chap was muscular, and, as Gale well knew, not wanting in physical courage. Gale thought that an encounter with him might prove painful.

"Oh, well, what do I care if he takes my picture?" he muttered philosophically. "Let him go ahead and enjoy himself. I'd give ten dollars, though, to know what his game is. I suppose he intends to publish my phiz in the *Bulletin,* but I'll be hanged if I can imagine what for."

The next morning Gale eagerly searched the pages of the *Bulletin* in the expectation of finding his picture there; but there was no sign of it.

"Possibly they're holding it over until to-morrow," he reflected. But his portrait did not ornament the *Bulletin* the next day, or for several days following.

Gale had just about decided that, after all, he had been mistaken in supposing that the Camera Chap had taken the snapshot for publication, when one morning he saw on the front page of Carroll's newspaper something which well-nigh paralyzed him.

Stretched across the top of the page was the following "scare head":

"The Truth About the *Chronicle* Explosion.—Daring Conspiracy Laid Bare.—The Innocence of Mr. Frederick Carroll, the People's Party Candidate for Mayor, Fully Established.—The *Bulletin* in Possession of Positive Proof That He Is the Victim of Bold Frame-up Engineered by His Desperate Political Enemies.—Real Facts of Case to be Laid Before Grand Jury."

There were other headlines beneath these, and several columns of smaller type were devoted to the details of the conspiracy.

In the center of the page was a half-tone portrait. Beneath it, in heavy-faced type, was the following:

"This is one of the scoundrels really responsible for the bomb outrage. It was this man who supplied the materials out of which the infernal machine was constructed. By means of the photograph, here reproduced, he has been positively identified by a man from whom he tried to purchase a stick of dynamite, and the jeweler who sold him the cheap alarm clock from the works of which the mechanism of the infernal machine was made. Further details are given elsewhere on this page."

It was the fact that Gale recognized the picture as a very good portrait of himself which caused him to turn pale and utter an exclamation of dismay as he read these startling lines.

With much trepidation he proceeded to read every word on the page. It was soon made very clear to him why there had been such a long interval between the taking of the snapshot and its publication on the front page of the *Bulletin.*

After taking the picture, Hawley had visited all the towns in the vicinity of Oldham. In each town he had gone to all the jewelry stores, and, showing Gale's picture, had asked the salespeople if they recalled having sold a clock to the man within the past few days.

This was the plan which the Camera Chap had suggested to Lawyer Hands, and which had earned the attorney's enthusiastic approval.

Hawley had reasoned that in all probability the clockwork used in the construction of the infernal machine had been purchased by the younger Gale. He had reasoned, also, that Gale would not be so careless as to purchase the clock in Oldham, but would take the precaution of going out of town for it. His scheme was to visit every nearby town in the hope of striking the store at which the purchase had been made.

It was a long and tedious task, and he realized that there was a good chance that he would have all his trouble for nothing; but Hawley resolutely stuck to it, and, after several days of discouragement, he met with success.

In a town called Roxbury, thirty-five miles from Oldham, he found a jeweler who positively identified the snapshot which the Camera Chap showed him as the photograph of a man who had bought a cheap alarm clock there a few days before.

The jeweler's wife and clerk also remembered Gale very well. Both of them had been present when the sale of the alarm clock was made, and were positive that the customer was the young man in the picture.

Highly elated with his success, the Camera Chap was about to return to Oldham to tell the good news to Lawyer Hands, when, quite unexpectedly, he made another very important discovery.

A block from the jewelry store some workmen were engaged in excavating for the foundation of a building. As Hawley passed this spot, he noticed that the men were blasting some rock with dynamite.

An inspiration came to him. Was it not possible, he thought, that Gale, too, had passed by this place, and, seeing the blasting going on, had tried to obtain from the workmen the explosive needed for the infernal machine?

There was only the merest chance, of course, that such was the case; but he was not in the habit of overlooking mere chances. He decided that this "hunch" was well worth investigating.

Stepping up to the foreman of the gang of workmen, he once more produced his snapshot, and showed it to the man.

"Ever seen this fellow before?" he inquired.

The man stared hard at the picture. "Why, sure," he

answered; "that's the guy who came to me the other day and offered me ten dollars for a stick of dynamite."

"And did you sell it to him?" the Camera Chap inquired eagerly.

"I did not," replied the man. "I thought he might be one of them anarchists, and I wasn't going to be responsible for no bomb outrages. I told him that if he wanted dynamite, he'd have to go somewhere else for it."

Hawley was disappointed at this answer. It would have been more satisfactory, of course, if he could have obtained proof that Gale had actually bought the explosive.

When he got back to Oldham, he told Lawyer Hands that it was his intention to go over all the ground once more in the hope of finding the place from which the explosive had been obtained. But the lawyer discouraged this plan.

"I am quite sure that you wouldn't succeed," he declared. "The chances are a hundred to one that the man who sold him the dynamite, or whatever explosive was used, would be afraid to admit it for fear of getting into trouble. Anyway, we have got evidence enough now to save your friend Carroll. The fact that Gale tried to purchase dynamite from those workmen, plus the fact that he purchased that alarm clock, would be enough to convince any jury that the bomb outrage was a frame-up."

"But suppose he claims that he bought the alarm clock for another purpose?" suggested the Camera Chap.

"In that event, he will be called upon to tell what he did with it. If he can't produce the clock, he will have a hard job getting anybody to believe his story.

"Besides," the lawyer added, "you are not the only one who has been making discoveries. I have found out where they got that wooden box in which the infernal machine was inclosed. Young Gale got it from in front of the Bulletin Building the other day. I have found a couple of witnesses who saw him pick it up."

"Great work!" Hawley exclaimed joyously. "How long do you think it will be before poor Carroll is free, Mr. Hands?"

"Not more than a couple of days," was the encouraging reply. "The grand jury meets to-morrow. I'm going to make it my business to see that they hear the real facts about this case. When they learn the truth, there'll be no indictment against Carroll."

Hawley's face lighted up. "You've certainly done us a great service," he said feelingly. "If ever I get a chance to show my gratitude——"

"You've got a chance now," the lawyer interrupted, with a smile.

"How?" Hawley demanded, with an eagerness which was ample proof of his sincerity.

"By agreeing to return with me to New York," the lawyer explained. "Mr. Paxton, your managing editor, made me promise that I would bring you back with me. He says he thinks you've had quite enough of the peace and quiet of the picturesque Catskills.

Hawley laughed. "I guess he's right about that," he said. "I think I can promise to return to New York with you, Mr. Hands, as soon as Fred is set free. I don't suppose he'll need my services any longer. When the *Bulletin* publishes the truth about the *Chronicle* explosion, there'll be such a wave of public sentiment in Fred's favor that he's sure to win at the coming election. I predict, too, a big boom in the *Bulletin's* circulation from now on."

CHAPTER XXXIX.

BACK ON PARK ROW.

As Lawyer Hands had confidently expected, the grand jury, after considering all the facts pertaining to the *Chronicle's* explosion case, refused to find an indictment against Fred Carroll.

As soon as the proprietor of the *Bulletin* was set free, the Camera Chap accompanied the lawyer back to New York, and received a warm welcome from Managing Editor Paxton and the *Sentinel* staff.

One of the first persons whom Hawley met after his return was Doctor Hugo Allyne, the eminent specialist, who had ascribed the Camera Chap's headaches to nervous indigestion, and advised him to go to some quiet spot and take the "rest cure."

It was on Broadway that Hawley encountered the man of medicine. Although the latter had a good memory for faces, he had some difficulty in recognizing in the ruddy-complexioned, clear-eyed young man who greeted him, the pale, tired patient who had come to his office for advice a few weeks before.

"Well, you're certainly looking much better," Doctor Allyne observed, when Hawley had finally succeeded in identifying himself. "You must have carried out my orders with great fidelity. How are the headaches?"

"Haven't had a single one since I saw you," the Camera Chap answered. "I'm feeling as fit as a fiddle."

"I'm glad to hear it," said the specialist, much gratified. "There is nothing like a rest cure for cases such as yours. A few weeks in the clear mountain air, and a careful avoidance of all forms of excitement, will work wonders."

"They certainly will," Hawley agreed, trying hard not to grin.

For the next few months the Camera Chap was so busy that he did not have time to go back to Oldham to visit his friend Carroll; but he kept track of what was going on in that town by means of the copies of the *Bulletin* which the mail brought him each day.

One day, just as he was stepping out of the *Sentinel* office, on his way to take some snapshots of a society wedding, he almost collided with a tall, broad-shouldered young man who was about to enter.

"Why, hello, Mr. Mayor!" he exclaimed delightedly. "This is indeed a pleasant surprise. What on earth is your honor doing so far away from Oldham?"

The Honorable Fred Carroll, mayor of Oldham, smiled expansively as he gripped the Camera Chap's hand.

"I've come to New York especially to look you up," he announced. "I have just discovered, old man, that I am even more in your debt than I thought I was."

As Carroll spoke, he drew from his waistcoat pocket a folded slip of pink paper, and handed it to Hawley.

"Why, what's this?" exclaimed the latter, feigning great astonishment. "A check for five thousand dollars made out to my order! What is the meaning of this, Mr. Mayor?"

"It means," replied Carroll, a break in his deep voice, "that I have learned the secret of that five thousand dollars' worth of advertising which your friend Mr. Cheston brought to the *Bulletin* at a time when the money was sorely needed. I was suspicious of that advertising from the start, Frank, but it was only yesterday that I learned the truth about it—that it was nothing but a ruse on

your part to get me to accept a loan from you. Old man, I shall never forget your kindness. You certainly are the best friend a fellow ever had. You had done so much for me already; then, to cap it all, you went and drew your savings——

"Oh, quit it!" Hawley interrupted gruffly. "For Heaven's sake, cut out the stump speech, Fred. The money was idle in the bank. I had no immediate use for it, and I knew that you had; so it was only logical that I should let you have it until such a time as the *Bulletin* was making enough money to enable you to pay me back. If that time has now arrived, I'll accept your check, and we'll consider the incident closed. But I can't take half of that amount. Rest assured, I didn't give all those people free advertising. I made contracts with them through an agency, gave them very low rates, and in a little while I had part of the money back in the bank."

As Carroll still seemed intent on thanking him, the Camera Chap headed him off by hurriedly changing the subject.

"How is Mrs. Carroll?" he inquired.

"First-rate, thank you. Melba joins me, Frank, in thank——"

"And how are you making out as mayor?"

"Fine! If I do say it myself, I seem to be making a great hit with the people of Oldham. I've already put into effect several important reforms. One of them was the repealing of the anticamera ordinance. It's a different town since the People's Party succeeded that bunch of grafters who were running things in Henkle's time. But I say, Frank, I really must express my thanks for——"

"By the way, what has become of Henkle?" the Camera Chap inquired hastily.

"He has retired to private life—says he's had enough of politics. I shall never forget, old man, what you have done for——"

"And the Gales? Are they still running the *Chronicle?* I understand they escaped being indicted for that bomb conspiracy."

"Yes," Carroll answered. "Henkle used all the influence he could wield to save them, and managed to get them whitewashed. Of course, for Melba's sake, I was mighty glad to have it turn out that way. But they're not running the *Chronicle* any more. Old Gale found himself so unpopular as a result of that explosion affair that as soon as he was able to leave the hospital he sold his paper at a ridiculously low figure; sold his house, too, and left town for good."

"And did his son go with him?"

"Yes. I understand, though, that he's trying to get back his old job on the New York *Daily News,* so possibly you'll have the pleasure of seeing him again before long. But I say, Frank, I've come all the way from Oldham to tell you how much I appreciate——"

"And how about my old friend Chief Hodgins?" the Camera Chap relentlessly interrupted. "I saw in the *Bulletin* that you fired him from the force as soon as you were sworn in. What is he doing now?"

Carroll laughed. "He has gone into the hotel business. He's bought an inn on Main Street, not far from police headquarters. He's got a big sign in the lobby, just before the clerk's desk, and it says: 'No cameras allowed on these premises!'"

THE END.

THE BANK ROBBER.

By HERO STRONG.

I think it was some time in July that she came to Locust Cottage.

It was a house that most ladies would have feared to live in, for its situation was lonely and secluded, and its reputation bad as possible. Some one was murdered there several years before, and such a circumstance is enough to blast the character of any house in the country. In the city they are used to such things, and do not mind them.

Mrs. Leroy did not take a lease of Locust Cottage without knowing what was just said of it. She heard old Granny Coe's story of the "death lights" that danced past the windows on stormy nights, and listened with tolerable patience to Peter Jones' narrative of the immense black dog that had howled at him one night when he was passing the house. Peter was a brave fellow, according to his own estimate, and he averred that he went to the fence and got a stake to make "daylight shine through the sassy cur," but when he struck at him the dog was not there. There was nothing left to mark the spot where he had stood and growled, except a speck of fire about as big as a dollar; and even that faded away as Peter gazed upon it, and left just nothing at all.

Then there was another story of a fair young girl, with long, flaxen hair, wreathed with water lilies; and this girl sat on the moldy piazza, of wet nights, and sang plaintive airs to an old broken-stringed lute, which, according to all descriptions, must have seen its best days long before.

In a country neighborhood, no one ever forgets anything, and so when the report transpired that Locust Cottage was haunted, every old crone in the vicinity would remember some occurrence which made it very reasonable that it should be haunted.

Captain Fox owned the cottage, and the captain was an extremely conscientious man. In fact, his conscience was a great trouble to him, for he was exceedingly fond of getting the best end of a bargain always, and it seems very unfortunate for such a man to have a conscience. Covetousness and conscientiousness never work well together. They go a great deal better in single harness.

The captain informed Mrs. Leroy that the cottage had the reputation of being inhabited by spirits, and this satisfied his conscientiousness. Then he told her that the people who said so were all irresponsible parties, and that satisfied his covetousness. Mrs. Leroy said it was quite immaterial to her about the spirits. She was not timid about dead people, and forthwith engaged the place.

Locust Cottage was very beautifully located, though it was fully half a mile from any other dwelling. There were locust trees in front, and at the rear of the house quite an extensive pond, where water lilies grew in abundance.

I remember of hearing the ladies of our family speaking about the new arrival, and I concluded that as they did not say anything against her she was some ugly old crone, who wanted to get away by herself and hire a house cheap. It is only young and pretty women who are slandered by their own sex.

I was busy in the village for seven hours of the day, but I went home to tea, and occasionally some lady caller of my mother's would remark on the pertinacity with which Mrs. Leroy kept herself secluded; but further

than that I knew and heard nothing. Neither did I care, for I had never been a lady's man, and at thirty-eight I was not likely to get up much of an interest for one I had never seen.

I was cashier of the Southbridge Bank, and, as ours was a manufacturing town, our institution did a very flourishing business, and kept one stirring most of the time.

It was a hot day in August, and I sat down for a moment, with a new number of a favorite magazine in my hand. It was so hot, and so near noon, that no one would be in until after dinner, I thought, and I should get a chance to read that article on South America of which there was so much said.

Scarcely, however, had I cut the first leaf before the door opened and a lady entered. As it was a lady, of course I could not do otherwise than bow, and be very polite to her.

She wanted a check cashed. I looked it over. It was New Orleans paper, and made payable to Eudora Leroy, or order.

Ah, thought I, looking at my fair visitor, so the old lady has a pretty daughter; and then I wondered that no one had ever spoken of her.

The face that gleamed on me through the black lace veil was a very beautiful face, though masked somewhat by lines of care or sorrow. Perhaps the old lady was tyrannical.

"Have you an order for the payment of the draft?" I asked.

"None is needed," she replied quietly. "I will indorse it." And, taking up a pen, she wrote the name on the back, in a free, graceful hand, Eudora Leroy.

"Then you are Mrs. Leroy?" I said, in some surprise.

"Yes, sir."

I took a good look at her. She was a brunette, and I have always fancied that style of woman. Some way, they look as if they would wash and wear better than the light style.

Her hair and eyes were very dark; the hair combed loosely, but in these days, when every woman's hair curls, it is not worth while to mention that fact, I suppose. She had some color, and her expression was sweet in the extreme.

The hand which she had ungloved to indorse the draft was white and shapely, not a hand unused to labor, by any means.

Her age was seven or eight and twenty, I judged; possibly she might be thirty. Faces like hers do not show their age.

After that I saw Mrs. Leroy quite frequently. She came to the bank about once a fortnight, and always on business of this kind. I mean with a check to be cashed. She evidently had plenty of money, so my supposition that she had taken Locust Cottage because the rent was low could not be correct.

Sometimes she would stop a moment in the bank and answer my remarks about the weather, or the news—for I always tried to have something ready to say to her; but generally she seemed in a hurry, and I noticed that she never went into the street, but always started directly for home when she left the bank.

All her marketing was done by a colored woman, a great, strong-looking, sphinx-faced creature, who never spoke an unnecessary word, and never answered any questions.

Mrs. Leroy was a Southerner, so it was probable, and the village concluded, that she had brought the woman from her old home with her.

I think I never told any one that I was getting quite well acquainted with Mrs. Leroy. Somehow, I did not feel as if I wanted to discuss her, or hear her discussed.

I slept at the bank nights, but I always closed at four o'clock and went home to tea. And about eight in the evening I generally returned, and went to bed in a back room adjoining the reception room.

One night in October, just as I was about to close to go home, Mrs. Leroy came in. She seemed very much frightened, and her face paled and flushed alternately.

"I wish to see you alone," she said, in a low voice. "Lock the outer door, if you please, and then listen to me."

I did as she requested, and then, sinking her voice to a whisper, she went on to tell me of a plot which had been laid by three men to break into the bank that night and rob the vault.

"Mr. Morelle," she said, in conclusion, "if you had not slept here I confess that I should have done nothing about it, because I risk my life by betraying them. But I heard them say that if you awoke, the only way would be to murder you, and I could not remain idle and suffer any one to be killed."

"But who are these men, and how did you learn their intentions? And from whom are you in danger?" I asked.

"These are questions I cannot answer. I have warned you, but you must not ask to know too much. Be on your guard. I think, if they discover that you have means of defense they will go away. You will call in some one, will you not?" And my heart beat a little faster as I marked the ill-concealed anxiety of her countenance.

"I will be prepared——"

"Hush!" she said, laying her hand imploringly on my arm. "You must not think of bloodshed! Promise me that you will not! Oh, Mr. Morelle, promise me that you will not kill him, for my sake! I have risked my life for you—now, in return, promise me that there shall be no bloodshed!"

"Who is it that I must not injure?"

"Alas, I cannot tell you! Oh!" she cried, under her breath, "what if I have doomed him to death?"

She evidently had a strong personal interest in one of the robbers, and I felt myself growing nervous and uneasy at the thought. What if one of the villains was her husband? Nothing more likely. One never knows anything about these women who move into out-of-the-way houses and do not join the sewing society, where every one is expected to put her character into the common stock for discussion.

I thanked Mrs. Leroy for coming to me. I promised that, so far as I could prevent it, there should be no bloodshed.

She went away with a sadly depressed air, and I went to call on Mr. Jenkins, the president of the bank. We talked the matter over, though, of course, I could not tell him how I had obtained my information. Then, together, we called on Davis and Lucas, two of our most efficient policemen, and it was arranged that I should go

home to tea, as usual, return to the bank at my accustomed hour, and admit Davis, Lucas, and Peabody, one of their set, by the back door.

We carried out the program. We were all well armed, and prepared for any emergency. The policemen went to sleep, and I kept watch. About twelve I heard a noise, like the grating of a file, but so dexterously was the instrument handled that for some time I was not sure but the creaking of the heavy shutters had deceived me.

Presently I heard the slightest touch in the world of iron against iron, and then I knew that the strong staple which held the padlock of the south window was being drawn out.

I touched Davis, and in a moment the three men were awake and on the alert.

We let the burglars alone until they were fairly at work picking the locks of the safe, and then we pounced upon them.

They were only two, and we were four; but they were desperate characters, and did not stand bound by any promises not to shed blood.

"Betrayed!" cried one of them, the younger of the two, for the third one had not entered the building, but was standing at the window, outside. "I know who has done it, and I swear by the heavens above us she shall pay dearly for it!"

"Submit quietly," said Lucas, "and we will not fire on you."

"Get out of my way!" returned the burglar defiantly, and at the same time he drew a pistol and fired full in Lucas' face.

He dodged, but the ball grazed his cheek, and the pain made Lucas forget everything else.

Before one of us could lift a finger to stop him, he had dashed the young man against the iron door of the safe, and, by the limp, helpless way in which his head hung down, I knew that his neck was broken.

Lucas eyed his work with grim satisfaction.

"It's the first one I ever killed outright, but I swear I'd do it again under like circumstances."

The other burglar submitted without resistance, but the third one was never secured.

There was a coroner's inquest on the dead body of the young robber, and just in the gray light of the morning Mrs. Leroy forced her way through the crowd to where the corpse lay.

I shall never forget the expression of the face she lifted to mine, so sadly reproachful, so full of unutterable grief.

"You promised me that there should be no murder done!" she said hoarsely.

"I could not help it. What was he to you?" I asked, with an eagerness I could not repress.

"He was my half brother. I had no reason to fear that he would be injured, for, when I heard their plan, it was arranged that he should remain outside and receive the gold. But, still, I had apprehensions for his safety, and that was why I asked you to promise what I did. Take me to him now."

I led her to his side, and saw her lift his cold head to her bosom and shower kisses on his icy lips.

"Oh, Albert, Albert!" she cried, in agony. "If my life would have saved yours! And to think that it was I who betrayed you to your death!"

Even as she spoke, I felt the strong shudder that shook her frame, and the next moment I received her fainting form in my arms.

I did not care what people said. From the depths of my soul I believed Eudora Leroy was pure and innocent, and she had no protector. So I took it upon myself to care for her. I carried her home, engaged a nurse, and called a physician.

And I am afraid that I answered my lady mother anything but politely when she remonstrated with me on what she called my extraordinary conduct.

But you will want to know about the burglar who was secured alive, and a few words will give the facts regarding him.

His name was Granger. He was from New Orleans, and had known Mrs. Leroy's brother there. His name was Albert Harper. He was a rash, high-tempered fellow, Granger said, and when in liquor easily influenced.

Granger was tried, and committed for four years, but I think he died before his time was out.

Mrs. Leroy was ill a long time. It was spring before she was able to see any one, and then she sent for me. I had known all along that she would do so, and had been awaiting her summons with nervous anxiety. For I suppose you have already guessed that I loved Eudora Leroy.

She was downstairs, lying on a lounge, when I was shown into her presence, but she arose instantly and took a chair by the window.

Before she spoke I had leisure to observe how much she had changed, and how wan and dejected she was generally. Even her voice had lost much of the silvery ring which I had loved so well to hear.

She began to tell me her little history. I had been kind to her, she said, and she thought it but justice that I should know all she had to tell.

By birth she was a Louisianian. Her father was a wealthy planter, who had been twice married. Albert was the son of his last wife. He had been a difficult child to manage from his birth, and, as he grew older, caused his friends a world of trouble. When he was fifteen, his mother died, committing him to the care of Eudora. She promised the dying woman to use her best influence for his good, and faithfully had the vow been kept. She had followed him into places where it brought a blush to her face to enter, and, vicious as he was, he never refused to go back with her. She had paid his debts—for all the property was left to her at the death of her father—she had borne with all his vices patiently, she had hoped always that he would eventually forsake his evil ways and become the honest, respectable man she desired him to be.

He had become concerned in a disgraceful affair at New Orleans which compelled him to leave the city, and she had settled up her affairs there and come to New England with him.

He was remorseful, and promised her faithfully that if she would take him to some secluded place, where he should never meet Granger again, he would try to reform. Granger had been his bane; but for his baleful influence he would never have sunk to such depths of degradation.

So, full of hope for the future, Eudora had come to Southbridge. She had married, only a year previously, a man much her senior, who had been thrown from his horse and killed only a year after the marriage.

I gathered from Eudora's manner while speaking of this marriage, that she had never loved her husband, but had become his wife because he loved her, and because his influence was very strong over Albert.

And the idea gave me unqualified satisfaction. You may say it is foolish to be jealous of the dead, but—well, never mind. Most of us are selfish enough to want the entire affections of those we love. We do not care to share a divided interest.

After their coming to Southbridge, Mrs. Leroy said, Albert had become thoroughly changed. He remained in the cottage all the time, engaged in painting, for he was possessed of considerable artistic talent. He would not go out, even for a walk, and thus it had happened that no one knew of his existence.

But Granger found him out at last, and then all hope of his reformation was over.

He brought him brandy, which always made him partially insane, and at such times Eudora's life was in danger. Albert was kind to her when not under the influence of drink, but brandy made a demon of him. There was nothing too bad for him to do when he was intoxicated. It was while he was having one of those frenzies that the plan to rob the bank was started.

Eudora had refused to furnish him with the money he asked for, and Granger suggested that they should get it at the bank. It was agreed upon, and they made all their calculations at once. A confederate was secured by Granger, and the two men had the boldness to come to Locust Cottage and ask to see Albert.

Eudora dared not refuse them, but, suspecting some villainy, she listened to the interview, and thus became aware of the intended burglary. It was arranged that Granger and Sterling should enter the bank, silence me, if I was disposed to be troublesome, and pass the gold out to Albert.

Eudora said that much as she felt it her duty to warn me, she did not know as she would have had the courage had it not been that she believed, according to their plan, that Albert would be out of danger.

Did she say nothing of her discovery to her brother, do you ask?

She said that she went down on her knees to him, and besought him to give up the mad scheme; and he told her that if she ever lisped another word to him on the matter it should cost her her life.

She was weeping when she finished, but presently she grew calm.

She was going away, she said, as soon as she could arrange for the change, where no one who knew her would ever see her again.

She looked so distant and so cold, when she said so, that she froze the passionate words that sprang to my lips. I rose to take my leave, and she just touched her fingers to the hand I extended, and said good-by as calmly as she would have said good night.

Just outside the door, I discovered that I had left my glove. I went back softly. I saw her holding it to her lips.

The next moment I had her in my arms, and I was telling her, in some unstudied words, that I loved her, and that I would never let her go anywhere.

She was very hard to convince. If I had been less in earnest than I was, I should have lost her; but I threw my whole soul into the work, and by and by she confessed that she did love me; that she had loved me a long time.

After that I did not care for the obstacles she raised. Dear, little, conscientious thing! She thought it would be wicked for her to disgrace me by becoming my wife because her brother had tried to rob a bank.

But I am a very determined man, and I would not let her out of my arms until she promised all I asked of her.

That day month I married her.

People talked about it, but Dora and I were happy enough to be able to afford to let them talk. Probably they felt easier after it.

A SMART BOY.

The power loom was the invention of a farmer's boy, who had never seen or heard of such a thing. He fashioned one with his penknife, and, when he got it all done, he showed it with great enthusiasm to his father, who at once kicked it all to pieces, saying he would have no boy about him who would spend his time on such foolish things. The boy was sent to a blacksmith to learn a trade, and his master took a lively interest in him.

He made a loom of what was left of the one his father had broken up, and showed it to his master. The blacksmith saw he had no common boy as an apprentice, and that the invention was a valuable one. He had a loom constructed under the supervision of the boy. It worked to their perfect satisfaction, and the blacksmith furnished the means to manufacture the looms, and the boy received half the profits.

In about a year the blacksmith wrote to the boy's father that he should bring with him a wealthy gentleman, who was the inventor of the celebrated power loom.

You may be able to judge of the astonishment at the old home when his son was presented to him as the inventor, who told him that the loom was the same as the model that he had kicked to pieces the previous year.

A BABOON WITH A BRAIN.

In the Transvaal some of the fruit gardens are much exposed to the ravages of large cynocephalic apes, and a good guard has to be kept, or the results of long labor would be lost. In some of those gardens grow certain shrubs which are much affected by wasps, the insects liking to attach thereto their nests.

These wasps, though small, have a very venomous sting. Baboons had often been noticed eying with envious glances the fast-ripening fruit in one certain garden, but feared to gather for fear of attracting the assaults of the wasps.

One morning the farmer heard terrible cries, and, with the aid of a good field glass he witnessed the following tragedy: A large, venerable baboon, chief of the band, was catching the younger apes and pitching them into the shrubs whereon hung the wasps' nests. This he repeated again and again, in spite of the most piteous cries from his victims.

Of course, the wasps assumed the defensive in swarms. During this part of the performance the old brute quietly fed on the fruit, deigning occasionally to throw fragmentary remains to some female and young baboons a little farther off.

THE NEWS OF ALL NATIONS.

How Missouri River Lowers Land Surfaces.

The Missouri River carries more silt than any other large river in the United States, except possibly the Rio Grande and the Colorado. It gathers annually from the country that it drains more than 123,000,000 tons of silt and soluble matter, some of which it distributes over the flood plains below to form productive agricultural lands, but most of which finds its way at last to the Gulf of Mexico.

It is by means of data of this kind that geologists compute the rate at which the lands are being worn away. It has been shown the Missouri River is lowering the surface of the land drained by it at the rate of one foot in 6,036 years. The surface of the United States as a whole is now being worn down at the rate of one foot in 9,120 years.

It has been estimated that if this erosive action of the streams of the United States could have been concentrated on the Isthmus of Panama, it would have dug in seventy-three days the canal which has just been completed after ten years' work, with the most powerful appliances yet devised by man.

Boy's Life Like Fiction.

Like a romance reads the tale of Benny Wittig, picked up as Eddy Sires by the police several days ago, and the happy climax of the story came in his restoration to his mother, Mrs. Frank Hitchcock, of Peoria, Ill.

The story begins with the death of Judge Wittig, near Latham, Ill., eleven years ago. His wife was sick, and misfortune had followed him, so that all he had was mortgaged and seized for debt. His two sons, Benny, aged six, and Louis, aged nine, were placed in the Lutheran Kinderfreund. Benny was adopted by a family named Sires, while Louis was taken by a family living near Nashville, Ill.

The Sires family went to Kentucky, tired of the boy, and abandoned him in the town of Somerset. The youngster beat his way by hook or crook to the Far West, and his first recollection of places he visited is of Los Angeles, Cal. Afterward he lived for over a year in Salt Lake City, where he attended school. He found other friends in Denver, and attended school there, also. It was while beating his way back to Kentucky to find his supposed parents—Sires—that he happened into Peoria. The police suspected that the handsome seventeen-year-old boy was a runaway, and detained him while investigating.

His story, though it seemed improbable, interested Chief Rhoades, who communicated with the police at Somerset and is awaiting a reply.

Meantime the story got into the city papers, and Mrs. Inez Ware and Miss Josephine Hitchcock, sister and half sister of the boy, called at police headquarters and identified him as Benny Wittig. In the good old storybook way, a scar on his neck established his identity, although the striking resemblance between the ladies and the boy is so great that it alone is convincing.

The mother, Mrs. Wittig, had married Frank Hitchcock and moved to Peoria. She is now partially paralyzed. She had made inquiries and put forth every effort she could to find her boys, and was successful in locating Louis, the eldest, who had led a dog's life as a bound boy. He had learned that his name was Wittig, and in a Decatur paper had read of the marriage of a Mrs. Wittig and Hitchcock. He wrote to her on the chance of her being his mother, and their relationship was established. He now conducts a prosperous garage.

Benny is now seventeen years old. He has been a wanderer for nine of the intervening years since his father's death, and the chain of happenings that have restored him to his mother is one that is read of in works of fiction, but seldom in real life.

Red and Green Light Tests.

It is strange how the color of a light makes it more or less visible, irrespective of its actual brilliancy. To test this, place two lights of the same color—two candles of the same size will do—in two tin boxes, and in each box perforate a pinhole. Cover one pinhole with green glass and one with red, and place them in a perfectly dark room.

To a normal person the green light will appear five times brighter when viewed obliquely than when viewed directly, but the red light behaves in the opposite way. Most people will pick up the green light when looking in some other direction and will be quite conscious of its presence, but when they turn their eyes directly toward it, they will not see it at all. The faint red light, on the other hand, will not be noticed at all until looked at directly, then it appears quite bright, but the instant the eyes are turned away from it it is gone.

New Mosquito Eradicator.

A genius of Jackson, Miss., has invented an electric motor which is to act as a mosquito exterminator. His plan is to have his motor revolve at just the right speed to make a humming noise like that of buzzing mosquitoes. That attracts all the insects in the neighborhood, and, as the motor is surrounded with a metal screen, charged with a powerful current, the mosquitoes alighting on it are instantly electrocuted.

Nonskid Banana Peel Discovered.

According to a news item wired from San Francisco, we are soon to have with us what one writer calls "the nonskid banana peel." The edible interior remains about the same as the ordinary kind, we are told, but the new covering presents a new boon to humanity that should make its discoverer famous, if not wealthy. The genius who is said to be able to produce a nice large banana with a coat like sandpaper is one Frederick Boegle, employed at the Burbank experiment farm near Hayward, Cal.

The discoverer of the so-called "nonskid peel," as a casing for the delectable contents guaranteed to be found inside, explains that the new fruit was obtained by crossing the ordinary banana with the cactus pear. Boegel says the new fruit has the usual delicious taste of banana,

but that the peeling may be dropped on the sidewalk with perfect safety to pedestrians.

If this is the precise case, then the peeling must be "nonskid" on the inside as well as the outer, but this is not to be considered, says a *Blade* expert, as it is contrary to all horticultural laws, past or present. Therefore, he says, if the "nonskid peel" happens to be dropped with the "nonskid" side downward, then the same old, treacherous, greasy, deadly, never-failing, calamitous thing will no doubt bring down its victims as it has always done since the Duke of Plazzatora, away back in the days and voyages of Christopher Columbus, discovered the banana and also that by craftily laying a strip of its covering in the way of Don Frijolo de Mountebank, he could rid himself of a powerful rival and thus get closer to the new world's discoverer as well as to the beautiful and charming Donna Isabella de Mendoza, back there in Spain.

But time will tell.

Boy Banjoist, Local Wonder.

Little Victor Vanover is the champion banjoist of the "neck o' the woods" at Freeling, Va. Though Victor is a mere midget, and has passed only his seventh milepost on the road of life, he can handle his banjo with all the grace and dexterity that ordinarily comes through years of practice, and, what is more to the young musician's credit, he takes up the instrument in a perfectly natural way, and without any apparent desire to "show off," and he is well aware of both his powers and limitations.

Victor began to practice at the age of five with a natural aptitude, and now he can "pick" any tune that he has ever heard, and that, too, with a clearness that would almost put to shame many professional banjoists.

Among the tunes that he can pick may be mentioned: "Cumberland Gap," "Old Joe Clark," "Casey Jones," "The Blind Coon Dog," "The Ship That Never Returned," "Sourwood Mountain," "The Gambling Man," "New River Train," and "Walking in the Parlor."

Quicksand Devours Big Plant.

Three laborers were killed and eight injured as they fled in terror to solid earth when quicksand devoured the big plant and three surrounding acres of land of the Knickerbocker Cement Co., at Greenport, not far from Hudson, N. Y. Here is a list of what was swallowed by the vortex:

A large power house.

An eighty-foot concrete smokestack.

A concrete storehouse.

A large frame barn which held, three horses and an automobile, all of which were buried.

A huge quantity of material, including forty thousand tons of trap rock.

Nick Altrock a Laugh Maker.

Nick Altrock, who, since the departure of Arlie Latham and "Germany" Schaeffer for other fields, is the only diamond clown remaining with the main show, forced a big laugh in the frolic between the Yanks and the Senators in New York not long ago, when an injury to a player threatened to cast a gloom over the festivities.

Fisher and several other Yankees started to run Shanks down between second and third, and the pitcher finally dashed up behind the runner and slammed him on the back with the clenched ball. The pellet happened to strike Shanks on the spine, and he crumpled up and dropped in his tracks.

As he was being revived, and the spectators were on tiptoes to know the extent of his hurt, Nick rushed upon the field, hit himself on the head, and pretended to fall unconscious. He picked himself up when his teammate revived, and staggered toward the bench with him. The performance broke the strain, made everybody laugh, and both Senators were cheered throughout the stands.

Summer and Winter Butter.

Scientific experiments have demonstrated that, contrary to the general belief, the yellow color of cream and butter is not necessarily an indication of their richness. It was discovered long ago that most vegetable matter contains a yellow substance called carotin, because it exists abundantly in carrots.

It is this substance contained in the cow's feed that gives rise to the color of milk and butter. Carotin is most abundant in the green forage available in spring and summer so that milk and butter produced then are more yellow than in the winter, although the percentage of fat in winter milk often is actually higher than in the rich-looking product obtained in summer.

Lightning Throws Bugler.

Lightning struck the projecting room of a motion-picture show in the brigade camp of the Sixth United States Infantry, at Douglas, Ariz., during a recent violent electrical storm. The bolt was deflected into the officers' section, throwing several of them down. Musician Greenspan was hit while in the act of blowing taps. He was thrown several feet, his head finally resting in a bucket of tar. His bugle was destroyed.

Bitten by Huge Water Snake.

Emil Nichau, an assistant in the office of City Engineer Wager, at Sandusky, Ohio, was bitten three times on the right hand by a large water snake while he was gathering lilies in the Black Channel section, between Cedar Point and West Huron. While he was quite sick for some time, he had fully recovered a few hours later.

The snake was killed. It measured fifty-two inches in length and nine and one-half inches in circumference at the thickest part of its body.

Can't Stop This Swimmer.

Incased in a straitjacket and carrying fifteen pounds of iron chain as a sort of extra ballast, Henry Elionsky swam from the Battery, New York, to Bay Ridge. The distance was about five miles and the time was two hours and forty minutes.

Elionsky was helped by the rushing tide. He had several narrow escapes from the harbor craft, and once a tugboat came within thirty feet of running him down.

Robber Chief Gets Twenty-five Years.

Henry Starr, of Chandler, Okla., pleaded guilty to bank robbery in the district court, and was sentenced to twenty-five years in the penitentiary. He was charged with the robbery of two banks at Stroud, Okla., into which he led his gang last March and took five thousand dollars.

Starr was wounded and four of his men—Claude Sawyer, "Bud" Maxfield, Charles Johnson, and Louis Estes—were captured.

Starr's life has been full of action. He has made rich hauls in bank robberies, engaged in the looting of trains, battled with posses seeking to arrest him, aided in quelling a jail outbreak, and unsuccessfully tried to reform following a pardon by President Roosevelt in 1903.

Highway Built in One Day.

When ten thousand volunteer workers, engaged in the construction of an interstate highway between Paducah, Ky., and Memphis, Tenn., laid down their picks at six o'clock at night, they had completed, in its most important details, the entire roadway for 150 miles.

To put the finishing touches to that section of the road from Paducah to the Kentucky State line, work was continued the next day. Congressmen, judges, city and county officials along the line of the highway were among the most active workers. Dinner was served by the women of the various cities and towns along the route.

Joe Shugrue's Eyes Better.

Joe Shugrue, the Jersey City lightweight boxer, has recovered his sight and will go on the stage. He has made up his mind that he might as well use his dramatic talent while he gives his eyes plenty of time to recover from the operation performed on them some months ago.

Sees Black Cat; is Injured.

Black-cat superstition has been thoroughly confirmed, for, when James Jensen, of St. Paul, Minn., was bowling down the residence district on a motor cycle, a black cat crossed just in front of him. One moment later he crashed into the rear of Ed Fisher's automobile.

Police and physicians are caring for Jensen, and he is going to look for the cat.

Polecat is Basely Libeled.

Some one has said that the polecat never takes a bath, and that he is afraid of water. He is wrong, and Doctor D. O. Norton, of Fort Collins, Col., is ready to prove the assertion. He recently returned from a fishing trip in North Park, where he tempted the rainbow in the Platte.

One morning his attention was attracted to six young animals which were playing on a sand bar a short distance away. A careful observation disclosed that they were of the genus skunk.

With "safety first" uppermost in his mind, the doctor crawled cautiously to a point of vantage, from which he could watch the animals more closely, and declares that after they had apparently tired of play, all six ran to the water and swam out into the swift current as though they had been so many ducks.

Trouble with His Turtles.

Chickens come home to roost, and so do turtles. A few days ago there were eight turtles in the basin around the fountain in the center of Commercial Park, at Columbus, Ind. A big snapping turtle declared war on the fish in the basin. The turtle killed a three-pound bass, and the little turtles "chewed up" several sunfish. Then Preston Shaw, park custodian, fished out the turtles, gave each of them a swift kick, and told them never to return.

Interval of several days to change reels.

Then came one of the exiled turtles, snooping around the wall that surrounds the basin, and saw no welcome sign. But that made no difference to the turtle. It finally scaled the wall, dropped into the water with a contented "plunk," and was home again. However, the custodian found the turtle before it had time to take a nap. He yanked it out, gave it two swift kicks this time, and threatened to use harsh words if it comes back again.

Lineman Battles Big Eagle.

Walter B. Sutton, of Bridgeton, N. J., a telephone lineman, while at work on a pole in the country near here, was attacked by a large eagle. Sutton saw the bird coming, and, as it swooped, he withdrew his hooks and quickly slid to the ground. The eagle followed and attacked him savagely.

Sutton had only his bare hands to defend himself and beat off the bird as best he could until finding a large stone, with which he was able to stun the bird with a well-directed blow. Grasping it by the neck, he choked it until it was helpless, and, taking it to his automobile, wired it fast, so that he could handle it safely.

He brought the big bird to his home, and now has it in a coop. It measures seven feet from tip to tip.

Blind Telephone Operator.

Despite total blindness, K. S. Thompson, of Erie, Ill., is an efficient telephone operator. He says it is much easier for him to hold his position than it was for him to get it in the first place, the telephone company having been doubtful as to his ability to make good.

Thompson overcomes his handicap by a very keen sense of hearing and by some added touches to his exchange equipment. In "plugging in" he depends upon brass points along a special designation strip. Sense of touch makes it possible for him to perceive which line he is plugging in on, and it is said that he makes fewer mistakes than are made by the usual full-visioned operator.

The blind operator takes much interest in his work and is constantly striving to improve his service.

No Border for United States Flag.

The recent display of an American flag with a white border around it, by a society at Fort Dodge, Iowa, promoting world peace, caused Attorney General Cosson to issue instructions to the Fort Dodge authorities to take action if the display is repeated.

Attorney General Cosson instructed the Fort Dodge authorities to invoke the law against mutilation of the flag, if it became necessary.

Birthday Party for a Horse.

Mrs. M. K. Grant, one of the wealthiest women in Wilmington, Del., gave a party in honor of the fourteenth birthday of her pet carriage horse, Prince Grant. The affair took place in the stable, where a luncheon was served to the stablemen, the household servants of the Grant family being at their command. An orchestra furnished music.

The horse, a roan gelding, with a trotting record of 2:23¼, has been in possession of Mrs. Grant since it was

a colt. Prince Grant shared in the celebration to the extent of eating four plates of ice cream, six pieces of cake, and a box of candy. He was gayly decorated with ribbons.

Every year, since the horse was three years old, Mrs. Grant has celebrated his birthday.

Boy Adopted by Nine Mothers.

Every one has heard of a cat with nine lives. But did any one ever hear of a boy with nine mothers?

Los Angeles has one. His name is Charles Fulmer. Here's the why and wherefore:

Fulmer recently finished Manual Arts High School. His teachers say they can see in him the budding genius who will, some day, give to the world great, new discoveries in medicine and surgery.

But he has none other than himeslf to whom to look, or he didn't have until the City Mothers of Los Angeles—nine of 'em—adopted him.

City Mother Mrs. Bret Harte Harris, one of the nine, is so sure their protégé is worth troubling about, she has voluntarily set about seeking a position for him that will help him to secure the wherewithal and the time to pursue his studies. All the other City Mothers are lending first aid.

This adoption scheme is just one of a thousand humanitarian acts which the City Mothers' bureau of Los Angeles has put into effect in its effort to aid the young people of the city in any way within its power.

Conductor Fights Hobos.

This is the story of how L. G. Moyer, conductor, of Fairbury, Neb., cleaned up a bunch of hobos and compelled several of them to seek local physicians for repairs:

When Passenger No. 8 pulled out for the East, probably fifty "sons of rest" attempted to ride out, but part of them were forced to get off while the others hid and made their get-away. The first section of ninety-four, of which Moyer was conductor, was due out for Council Bluffs at six o'clock, but did not start until eleven o'clock.

About twenty-five hobos got in a box car. The train stopped at the main-line switch, and Moyer got in the car and ordered the tramps out. They offered resistance, and he cleaned up the bunch with an iron brake rod in a very short time.

The tramps had given the train crews all kinds of grief recently. Every outgoing crew has had trouble ridding the train from ten to one hundred of these passengers. This last bunch are bitter toward Moyer, and declare they will remain here until they kill him.

Takes Hikes Barefooted.

Eugene Willard, of Chelsea, Mass., easily is the champion barefoot walker of the United States. A dozen years ago Willard decided to take up barefoot pedestrianism as a pastime, and has kept at it ever since. Of course, he occasionally gets out his shoes, brushes off the dust which has accumulated on them, and puts them on, but he doesn't keep them on any longer than is absolutely necessary.

"Barefoot Gene," as he is known in his home city, has made some long barefoot walks. One of those was between Philadelphia, Pa., and St. Louis, Mo., and at another time he covered the entire distance between Savannah, Ga., and Tampa, Fla. He has under consideration a barefoot walk between Boston, Mass., and El Paso, Texas.

In Prison Twenty-one Years, Weds.

After serving twenty-one years in the Joliet Penitentiary, William Roach, paroled last week, is on his honeymoon. Roach was sent up for murder. Toward the latter part of his sentence he became a "trusty." As trusty he was allowed to visit the town. On one of his visits he met Hannah Edwards, who worked in the restaurant owned by her mother, Mrs. William Edwards.

Although Roach never knew that he would be free, he was unable to keep from falling in love. Once a week he saw Hannah, and then the authorities decided that he had been in prison long enough. Roach was paroled. He came back to Chicago, and went to his old home in Wilmette. And then he returned to Joliet for Hannah. They were married by the Reverend T. de Witt Tanner.

Shot Stealing Bread for Starving Family.

Shot twice through the body as he was attempting to steal a loaf of bread from the rear gallery of the home of Joseph Haseman, John Reou, of New Orleans, La., was rushed to the Charity Hospital. From his hospital cot he explained the motive for the attempted theft.

"My eight children were crying all night for food," he said. "I listened to their sobs until I could not bear their suffering any longer. So I went out to steal them a loaf of bread."

Haseman, who is a street-car conductor, did the shooting. He has been arrested. The police say the case is the most pitiful that has come under their notice in several years. The charge against Reou will probably be dropped.

One of the bullets Haseman fired at the father of eight hungry children struck him in the right arm and another in the left side. Neither of the wounds is considered serious.

Reou, now broken in health and spirits, married twenty-one years ago. He has always borne a good reputation, which is vouched for by several members of the police department who know him and by friends and former employers. Recently he lost his position as a clerk in a grocery store because his eyesight was failing and his health was broken. He tried many times to get work, and failed. Gradually the small sum saved by him and his wife was gone.

His oldest daughter, Julia, aged twenty, got a position which pays her six dollars a week. Charles, his oldest son, aged sixteen, took a position as office boy, and earns two and one-half dollars a week. Olivia, another daughter, aged twelve, receives a half dollar a week for helping a dressmaker. The house they live in costs them twelve dollars per month.

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